Special Issue-15 Years Of Home Video

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VIDEO'S TUMULTUOUS ROOTS

**VIDEOTESTS** 

S-VHSVCR, Combi Player, 8mm VCR & Camcorder



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NOV 94 09V2 INSIDE THE

## HITACHI

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x16

"The chips,
the transport,
the electronic
circuitry, and the optics
are proof of Hitachi's
excellence in engineering."

## HITACHI

#### THE RIGHT PRODUCT

o achieve true engineering excellence, a camcorder must be great without drawing overt attention to its greatness. The camcorder must address real working needs. It must be easy-to-use, perform flawlessly, maximize creativity, and produce videos that exemplify the state-of-the-art. The engineering must be present but invisible. Easier said than done.

With their new 8mm VM-E55A, the engineers of Hitachi have developed an attractive and ergonomic camcorder that is much more than just another "pretty face." The VM-E55A's superlative performance is built into the chips, transport, electronic circuitry, and optical system — proof of Hitachi's leadership in video engineering and design.

#### THE RIGHT FEATURES

The VM-E55A offers feature advancements ordinarily reserved for much heavier and higher-priced models. It is a diminutive (3 5/8 x 4 1/2 x 8-inch), lightweight (1.9 lbs) camcorder that videotapes effectively in light as low as 1 lux, with a unique electronic image stabilization system and a 16:1 power zoom. Its autofocus system uses a foolproof through-the-



The Hitachi engineers have developed a camcorder that is more than a pretty face.

lens approach and its white balance and auto iris are both controlled by a highly-sophisticated artificial intelligence circuit. Its digitally programmed autoexposure system provides perfect pictures with pinpoint accuracy.

Hitachi engineers surveyed camcorder users and found that both shooting and editing are of equal importance to today's videographer. As a result, insert editing and dual-machine synchro-edit control are added for post-production utility. A lens macro setting lets you shoot subjects as close as 3/8-inch, while the shutter speed automatically switches between 1/60 and 1/4000 seconds.

The camcorder is designed for someone who truly cares about picture quality and creative options. Yet it is still very easy to use. This user-friendly engineering is even extended to the remote that controls both the camcorder and most brands of TV.

#### THE RIGHT ENGINEERING

The engineering advancements that define the VM-

Circle 1 on Reader Service Card.

E55A begin at the microprocessor level. Hitachi has applied its international R&D muscle to an innovative miniaturized microprocessor architecture that enhances even standard camcorder functions.

The VM-E55A's zoom offers an array of microprocessor-controlled options. A Digital Zoom function extends the range of the power zoom to 16-times, while an Instant Zoom button magnifies any scene instantly an additional 1.5-times. The camcorder is also smart enough to automatically focus on the subject in the center of the viewfinder unless the manual focus is engaged.

Other dedicated microprocessors operate Hitachi's acclaimed Electronic Image Stabilizer, which is known throughout the industry for



Userfriend enginexten the m brand remote that a control both to camedand m TV bra

## INSIDE THE VM-E55A CAMCORDER

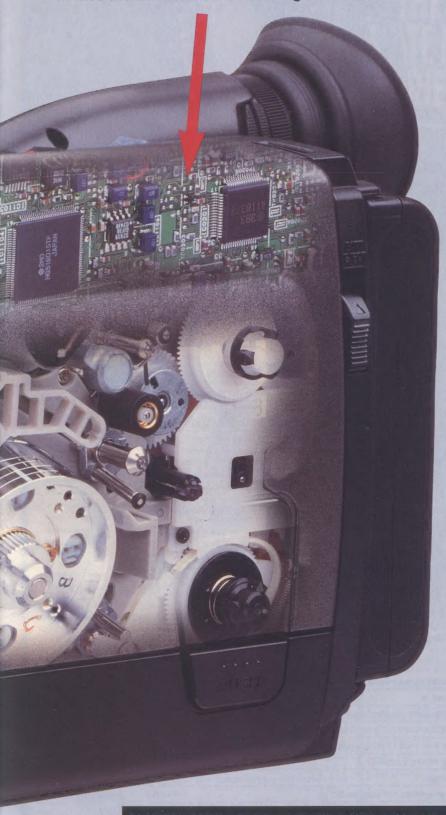
Automatic white balance and auto iris



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Digital and Instant zoom settings provide immediate and accurate scene magnification.



removing extraneous motions without image degradation. Three fade modes are digitally encoded: white fade (standard fade). curtain-wipe fade (whereby two vertical curtains wipe the scene off the screen), and zoom fade (zooming to a white screen). An electronic character generator stores two different titles in memory and allows users to customize their titles with two lines of 16 characters for each title.

#### THE RIGHT DESIGN

Hitachi's designers have fashioned a streamlined and well-balanced exterior that complements the unit's engineering aesthetic. Overall, the pride, quality, and advancements that went into the making of the VM-E55A are reflected in the fact that it is already the most successful camcorder debut in the company's history.

The Hitachi engineers have met the challenge. They have developed an 8mm camcorder that delivers the most important features and the most efficient operation for a most affordable price. Try it out for yourself to appreciate the accomplishment. You'll see why the VM-E55A truly represents Excellence in Engineering.

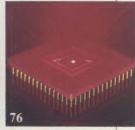
For more information on the Hitachi VM-E55A, please write to: Hitachi Home Electronics (America), Inc., Customer Service Dept., 3890 Steve Reynolds Boulevard, Norcross, GA 30093-3012

or call 1-800-HITACHI

magazine







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Video Magazine Volume XVII Number 6



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## EXPERIENCE.

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Die Hard	*036760
Die Hard 2	*004180
The Hunt For Red October	*082500
The Abyss	*088110
Backdraft	*055900
Alien	000020
Aliens	036090
Alien 3	*104250
The Bible	*007470
Conan The Barbarian	*022050
The Empire Of The Sun	*063320
Chinatown	*020250
The Wizard Of Oz	000140
Always	*092150
Fatal Attraction	043930
National Lampoon's Animal House	021150
It's A Wonderful Life 45th Anniversary Ed.	039230
Jaws	010000
North By Northwest	*084420
The Man Who Would Be King	*008580
Beverly Hills Cop	020530

Die Hard	*0367607
Die Hard 2	*0041806
The Hunt For Red October	*0825000
The Abyss	*0881102
Backdraft	*0559005
Alien	0000208
Aliens	0360909
Allen 3	*1042506
The Bible	*0074708
Conan The Barbarian	*0220509
The Empire Of The Sun	*0633206
Chinatown	*0202507
The Wizard Of Oz	0001404
Always	*0921502
Fatal Attraction	0439307
National Lampoon's Animal House	0211508
it's A Wonderful Life 45th Anniversary Ed.	0392308
Jaws	0100008
North By Northwest	*0844209
The Man Who Would Be King	*0085803
Beverly Hills Cop	0205302
Beverly Hills Cop II	0431908
Bugsy	*0853408
Casablanca	0050708
Henry V (1990)	0040303
Patton	0788703
Robin Hood: Prince Of Thieves	*0976803
Lethal Weapon	0630806
Lethal Weapon 2	*0642702
Lethal Weapon 3	*1051507
Predator	*0364901

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Dances With Wolves *0805200	Under Siege* 1077908
	DETUNCT PAR
Star Wars *0056408	Return of The Jedi *0354704
	HADROAN COME
The Empire Strikes Back *0091009	Bladerunner (Director's Cut)*

And Market Co.	
Star Trek— The Motion Picture	*0203505
Star Trek II— The Wrath Of Khan	*0201301
Star Trek III— The Search For Spock	*0201608
Star Trek IV— The Voyage Home	*0430603
Star Trek V— The Final Frontier	*0448605
Star Trek VI—The Undiscovered Country	*1001007
Superman: The Movie	*0001305
The African Queen	0051102
Kindergarten Cop	0523407
Dangerous Liaisons	*0638700
Blue Velvet	*0515007
Hard To Kill	0953505
Road Warrior	0602805
Beetlejuice	0633008
American Graffiti	0211300
Harry Connick, Jr.: Singin' & Swingin'	0968107
All Dogs Go To Heaver	n 0289702
Chariots Of Fire	0601401
Memphis Belle	*0983502
Forbidden Planet	*0844407
Black Rain	*0911701
Edward Scissorhands	0104604
Body Heat	0602003
Caddyshack	0602300
Hamlet (1990)	0970608
Patriot Games	*1051309
E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial	0681106
Batman (1989)	*0642504
Batman Returns	*1029909
Scarface (1983)	0216804
Hook	*0854307
Lawnmower Man	1014505

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Cool World

Forever Young

Howard's End

**Basic Instinct** 

The Godfather The Godfather Part III

My Cousin Vinny

The Blues Brothers

The Last Boy Scout Goodfellas

Back To The Future

**Back To The Future** 

Back To The Future Part III

**Bugs Bunny Classics** 

A League Of Their Own \*1078005 Madonna: Truth Or Dare \*0232900

Far And Away

Field Of Dreams The Prince Of Tides

New Jack City

Passenger 57

**Judgment Day** Universal Soldier

The Silence Of

The Lambs

The Sound Of Music

Sneakers

Boomerang **Fried Green Tomatoes** 

Dune **Home Alone** 

Part II

Paul McCartney's

Death Becomes Her

The Last Of The Mohicans (1992)

\*1084706

\*1104306

\*1102805

0234708

\*1033208

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\*1071604 \*0233205

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Predator 2

2001: A Space Odyssey

Ghost

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## Looking back, looking ahead

One of the best things about looking back at the way things were is that it helps us focus on looking ahead, to think about the way things might be in the years to come. In the past few months the Video Magazine staff has spent a lot of time looking back over the brief, turbulent history of home video reflected in these pages. Video Magazine was there at the beginning and remains the one constant source of information for video enthusiasts, the only consumer magazine that traces an unbroken line of continuous publication throughout the Video Era.

You can join us in this retrospective by turning to the special 15th-anniversary section that begins on page 57. But home video is still chiefly about looking ahead, about pushing the technological envelope in search of better ways to bring high-quality video entertainment to the home, just as *Video Magazine* has, since its inception, been about keeping you ahead of the curve with the latest information about

products, technology, programs and trends.

That's why this anniversary issue includes a selection of some of today's hottest state-of-the-art gear by Senior Editor Brent Butterworth. We're also taking a long look forward, with Contributing Editor Frank Beacham's help, at what the next 15 years may bring as video moves into its digital era. Crystal-balling is an inexact science, but our editorial staff took a crack at it and the results, tongue only partly in cheek, are reported by Managing Editor Stan Pinkwas in "Off the Air."

Fifteen years after Video Magazine first appeared on newsstands, home video is as tumultous as ever as it stands on the threshold of an era that promises new generations of products, programs and delivery

systems. We look forward to bringing that new era to you.

You'll notice a fresh look in parts of the magazine this month thanks to new heads by Art Director Marshall Moseley for our regular columns and departments. We've recast "Gazette" as "Fast Forward" and added several new elements. "New Products" follows immediately, so you can quickly keep up to date with the latest happenings in home video.

Jan Bang

James M. Barry Editor



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Editor-in-Chief, Art Levis (1936-1991)



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## The only way we could make home theater sound any better was to lower the price of admission.

There was a time when you had to be made of money to put together your very own home theater system.

Fortunately Yamaha's affordable new RX-V470 A/V receiver has changed all that.

It's the only receiver priced under \$500 that combines Yamaha Cinema DSP, digitally processed Dolby Pro Logic\* and equal power in the right, left and center channels (a powerful 50 watts each). The only one.

Cinema DSP, as you probably recall, is a remarkable advance that combines two of the most exciting developments to come down the audio turnpike in quite some time.

Yamaha Digital Sound Field Processing (DSP), a unique technology which recreates the actual acoustics of some of the most famous performance venues right in your home.

And Dolby Pro Logic, which places movie dialogue and sound effects around the room, precisely as the director intended. When combined, these two technologies create "phantom" surround speakers that allow

sound to travel beyond
the normal range of your
actual surround speakers.
Something which expands
your room's sound field
to recreate the biggerthan-life acoustical experience of a modern-day
movie theater.

In short, Cinema DSP stands everything else on its ears. And until now, it's something you could only expect to find on Yamaha's

Music and Effects

Dialogue and Effects

Phantom Speakers
Surround Sound Field

Yamaha's exclusive Cinema DSP fills every nook and cranny.

expect to find on Yamaha's more expensive A/V receivers and amplifiers.

Yamaha's impressive new RX-V470. You'll be hardpressed to find an A/V receiver that gives you as much bang for your buck.

Or even as much crash YAMAHA and kaboom, for that matter.

For the dealer nearest you, call 1-800-4YAMAHA today.



Septemeber 1993 Number Seven

ave you ever seen satellite TV? If not, you don't know what you're missing! Because satellite TV offers you the ultimate home entertainment feast: excellent audio reception...exceptional video reception...and superior programming choice. Interested?

Getting Started is now easier than ever. Your local professional satellite dealer can help (he's listed in the Yellow Pages under "Satellite Television" or call 1-800-285-5621 for a dealer referral). He'll be able to demonstrate a variety of home satellite systems in different price ranges that meet your particular needs, and work best in your part of the country. There's even a smaller-sized dish that gives you the same quality features at a lower cost. And don't worry. Your home satellite system will be easy-as-pie to operate. All you have to do is just push a button on your remote control.

And choosing your programming is easy, too. For lots of home satellite system owners, HBO Satellite Services is their first stop. You'll have a variety of programming packages that include the most requested channels like CNN, ESPN, TBS, and TNT to choose from. You also get multiplex HBO and Cinemax three channels of HBO and two channels of Cinemax, each with their own unique schedule and programming mix. You get HBO, HBO2, HBO3, Cinemax, and Cinemax2 — all for the cost of your regular HBO/Cinemax subscription. It's a great value, and a great way to watch TV.

So, check out satellite TV and multiplex HBO and Cinemax today. You won't believe your eves and ears!

Want to know more? Call **HBO Satellite Services at** 1-800-285-5621.



#### HDTV, widescreen TV & the Cable Act

#### Get the drool bucket

Craig Hubler's observation about the lack of interest in HDTV ("Feedback," July '93) caught my eye. Is there a "typical" consumer in the purest sense? If so, are they all "perfectly content" with their equipment? You can find me, almost anytime, at the fence of financial reality, tongue dangling, peering over at the electronics promised land. Believe me, if that fence didn't exist, I'd be right at the front of the line, currency in hand, ready to trade up from 240 lines of resolution, a 20-inch picture and non-Pro-Logic sound. For my part, I can only say that after reading my monthly copy of Video Magazine, there's no point in giving it to anyone else, it having been rendered unreadable from being drooled upon. Hey, they're gonna do HDTV anyway; relax and enjoy, when - or if you can!

Fred Barrett North Plainfield, New Jersey

#### Squaring the circle

In response to this concern over losing image area in a widescreen format ("Feedback," July '93): One might apply the same argument to film. Try telling anyone involved in film production that he will lose image area by shooting in CinemaScope and he will have you put away in a rubber room. What has drawing rectangles in a circle got to do with anything? When you want to shoot a scene, you don't use whatever lens or setting happens to be in place. You decide what you want to see, then pick the lens that will give you the image frame you desire. You don't start with the circle (lens), then make the rectangle (scene) fit. This is one reason the zoom lens was invented. Apparently, Dr. Johnson has never seen one.

> Bruce Hansen Stone Mountain, Georgia

#### Head drum case

In his response to Bob Osborne in your June "Q&A," Roderick Woodcock writes that RCA's CC360 VHS camcorder has a 44mm-diameter head drum. The CC360 is equipped, as are all

RCA VHS camcorders, with a 62mm head drum. A full-size head drum maintains image stability during playback on a home VCR. There are other possible reasons for the image shift on the thirdgeneration tapes that Osborne mentioned, but head drum size differential is not the problem.

> Sam Scialdone Sales Education/ Training Program Manager Thomson Consumer Electronics

Editor's reply: We stand corrected.

#### No-win situation

The new cable regulations ("Cable Scorecard," Apr. '93) set up a no-win situation for all but FCC attorneys. Here's why: First, adding more regulations does not solve any problems. Cable



competition is legal in only a few towns in the U.S. In these towns, customer service is superior and cable prices are lower. Second, government regulation is

Finally, when a state-protected monopoly censors, it differs little from government censorship. The 1992 Cable Act enables each cable monopoly to impose new editorial controls over the content of local cable-access channels. The courts have ruled that access programming is free speech subject to First Amendment protections. With the new regulations, cable-access programming will be less diverse.

> Jeffrey Chase Boston, Massachusetts

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Digital music sources and home theater have heated up the home entertainment scene. To meet the challenge, the all-new Infinity Reference Standard Series speakers employ exclusive technologies to deliver hotter performance without burning a hole in your wallet.

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#### A monthly chronicle of people, products, technology & trends

#### **Trading places**

"It's never easy. No matter how easy you think it's going to be - making movies is hard," says Bill Murray of his experiences on the set of Mad Dog and Glory, now on tape and disc from MCA/Universal Home Video. The film presented an unusual challenge for the much-loved comedian. For the first time in his career, he got to play the heavy, a vicious Chicago gangster who "owns" beautiful bartender played by Uma Thurman. Robert De Niro was also



cast against type when he took the role of a timid police crime technician who must stand up to Murray's tough guy to save the girl. The two actors found their working methods to be as different as their reputations suggest.

"Bob likes to narrow his concentra-

tion to a certain area, and I like to become looser and help everyone release tension on the set," Murray explains. De Niro's intensity was somewhat intimidating for the comedian, at least at the start. "You're on your way to the set and you think, 'This son-ofa-bitch is going to be completely ready to work when I get there.' It's very alien to my nature."

Did Murray model his character after any of De Niro's famed big-screen bad guys? "It wouldn't have been appropriate," deadpans Murray, "to act like the catcher in Bang the Drum Slowly, not too professional at all."

#### THX gets wired

Many in the home theater industry greeted Lucasfilm's new THX licensing program for speaker and interconnect cables with chuckles

and skepticism. But this venture could be the most important event in the history of the audio cable industry.

The idea for THX cables arose from problems installers encountered when using exotic audiophile cables. According to Anthony Grimani, director of li-



censing for Lucasfilm THX, many of these cables are not based on sound electrical principles - they often exhibit high capacitance, resistance or inductance, all of which can greatly degrade sound. Cheaper cable can also suffer from these deficiencies. Lucasfilm measures all cables submitted for THX approval to make sure they're free of these problems. Each cable has a specified maximum length, so you don't have to worry about the sonic problems caused by long wire runs.

This standardization could help calm the nerves of audio/videophiles who have been confused by the longrunning debate about audio cable. Most audiophiles say high-end cables sound better; most engineers say that if a cable makes your system sound different, it's

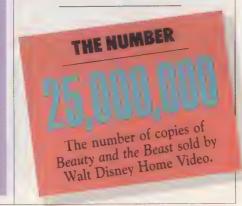
#### THE ROM ROARS

Jurassic Park's extraordinary visual effects may have brought dinosaurs back from extinction at theaters across the U.S. this summer, but the film's production team had another secret weapon in its quest for cinematic realism: Digital Theater Systems (DTS), a new audio playback system exclusively for theaters that reads up to 3-1/2 hours of discrete six-channel sound from a single five-inch CD-ROM disc.

DTS uses a digital time code printed on the film to control a separate CD-ROM player and disc. The two other digital theater systems - Sony Digital Sound and Dolby's SRD - place the entire soundtrack on the film itself, where it is reportedly far more susceptible to damage and requires greater data com-

pression, theoretically dropping sound quality.

Because DTS is so inexpensive – systems range from about \$4,000 to \$6,000 compared with \$15,000 to \$20,000 for the competing digital systems approximately half of the more than 2,000 theaters that showed Jurassic Park installed the system. With so many DTS theaters ready to go, many more films are likely to be released with DTS sound. Meanwhile, the five-inch disc marches on toward apparent dominance of both theatrical and home entertainment media.



#### QUOTE OF THE MONTH

doing something wrong. Lucasfilm takes no sides, but if a cable is THX-certified, at least you'll know the cable isn't de-

- TETSURO KUDO,
president, Pioneer Laserdisc Corp. of America,
on soon-to-be-released video CDs that
employ the video standard of the
Moving Pictures Experts

Group.

The cables use a new color-coding scheme created for home

grading the

theater. The left channel is blue, the right is red, the center is green, the subwoofer is blue, the left surround is blue on a white field, and the right surround is red on a white field. Both speaker and line-level THX cables are available. There's also a multichannel interconnect with 25-pin connectors. With this cable, it's not necessary to connect six cables from the decoder to the amps. You connect only this one. The new Kenwood THX electronics already accept this cable.

Fittingly, the first THX cables come from Monster Cable, the wire of choice for movie sound facilities and theaters. (Many movies carry a "Made With Monster Cable" credit.) With interest among installers very high, we expect THX cables to earn acclaim among home theater enthusiasts—and to bring standards to an industry that sorely needs them. —Brent Butterworth

help parents set viewing limits kids will accept.
The TV Allowance is a two-

kids will accept.

The TV Allowance is a two-pound keypad with an LCD readout that works like a debit card to help families manage how much television is watched in •

household. Parents can program the device for each of up to four children. Each kid, using a personal access code,

can then watch TV or play videogames to the limit of his or her time allowance, but no more.

The idea is to make kids responsible for their own TV habits, according to Levenson, who says it usually takes kids about two weeks to get used to the idea, although the system cuts down on conflicts right away.

TV Allowance keeps tab for each minute of viewing and automatically rolls over an unchanged allotment from week to week. Kids can check to see how much time is left or save up unused time. Parents can block out segments of the day, like late at night, when they don't want kids watching any TV, and can override their own instructions for special occasions.

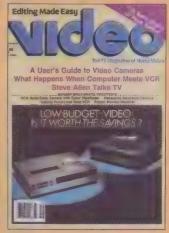
TV Allowance is priced at \$99 and is available from Mindmaster Inc. For further information call 800-231-4410.

#### viewing limits Art for video's sake

A Florida company wants to transform the unsightly hodgepodge of your videocassette shelves into a work of art. VC aRt from the Perchard Co. of Fort Lauderdale offers four colorful designs of adhesive paper divided into five parts. Each part is attached to the spine of an individual cassette box and stacked side by side on a shelf and voila, a pretty picture. Hmmmm, where did I put Terminator 2? Was it behind the hot air balloons or the dancers?

#### TIMESHIFT

TEN YEARS AGO IN VIDEO MAGAZINE



September 1983

"By the end of this year, just as we are ready to enter ominous-sounding 1984, the videocassette recorder will be in 10 percent of our homes. So while the rest of us celebrate the new year, the people who make and sell VCRs will celebrate the greening of the VCR into a massmarket commodity. Though VCRs are more likely than ever to be characterized as household appliances, rest

assured this magazine will continue to regard them as the cornerstone of the home video hobby...Sony has begun selling blank VHS tape. The initial offering is a a T-120 cassette priced at \$24.95...New CED videodisc releases this month include Spellbound, In the Heat of the Night, Sergeant York, Love Me Tender, First Blood and The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly...For the moment, tube technology has the nod in the low-light department—an important consideration since many amateur videographers elect to avoid the expense and fuss of supplementary lights. But solid-state imaging devices like CCDs are starting to arrive...Cable TV of the 1980s could start to look like broadcast TV of the 1950s and '60s if recent trends continue."

TV
on a
budget

What if you
could end the arguments
with your kids over how
much time they can spend
glued to the tube? Better yet, what if you
could get your kids to limit their own
time? Thoughts like these inspired Mia-

mi inventor Randal Levenson to create

TV Allowance, an ingenious device to

### Late Breaking News

TEN VCR manufacturers are meeting this month to develop technical standards for digital HDTV VCRs for consumers. Participants include Hi-

tachi, Mitsubishi, Philips, Sanyo, Sharp, Sony, Thomson, Toshiba and JVC. At presstime, the specifications will call for quarter-inch metal-evaporated tape (or something similar), running at double speed for HDTV recording. Two cassettes are planned: a five-by-three-inch version for VCRs and a DAT-sized one for camcorders. The digital audio would use 48-kilohertz, 16-bit sampling for stereo, 32-kHz, 12-bit sampling for four-channel sound.

THE VIDEO CD CAME CLOSER to reality this summer as 10 companies announced they will back the so-called White Book standard, originally developed by JVC and Philips for karaoke. The standard is based on MPEG-1 compression. It offers 74 minutes of video (sub-VHS quality, we'd guess) and audio on a five-inch CD.

While many videophiles are probably tiring of hearing endless talk about new video CD formats, this one looks real—backers include Sony, Matsushita, Philips, JVC and Paramount Home Video.

THE CLINTON ADMINISTRAtion's fascination with high-tech clearly extends to video. According to *The New York Times*, deputy chief of staff Mark D. Gearan stashes a camcorder in his desk so he can ambush visiting movie stars with pleas for videotaped hellos to his year-old daughter. "I feel like a bad reporter for *Variety* lurking in the West Wing" to catch celebrities, said the star-struck deputy.

UNIVERSAL PICTURES JOINS Paramount and Columbia TriStar as a source of hit movies for pay-per-view on Hughes' DirecTv when the high-powered DBS system goes into service next spring.

THE APPLE MACINTOSH HAS always been a great graphics computer, but thanks to the high cost (\$2,000 and up) of Mac-compatible NTSC output boards, it hasn't made serious inroads into low-end desktop video.

But this could change. Apple has introduced two new Macintoshes, a Centris and a Quadra, with integral NTSC video outputs and an NTSC input for video capture through *Quick-Time*. Both use a new type of S-video connector with three extra pins to provide power to desktop video cameras.

HOW MUCH BETTER ARE THE new lithium-ion batteries in Sony's CCD-200 and -300 camcorders? A lot, according to a technical paper from Sony. The 10 scientists who authored the paper say a lithium-ion battery is about half the size and weight of a comparable nickel-cadmium battery, but delivers triple the average voltage with no memory effect.

Meanwhile, a company called Enstore Energy is working to enhance the performance of rechargeable batteries by improving chargers. The company's Enchip circuitry reads the electrochemical level of the battery, and optimizes the charger's output for the battery condition. The company claims Enchip charges a typical nickel-cadmium battery in as little as 15 minutes, increases battery capacity by up to 110 percent, extends battery life and eliminates memory effect.

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Instant Programmer™ with the new
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## Columbia House. The face of jazz.



Jazz guitar great Lee Ritenour salutes another jazz great, Wes Montgomery. Lee reconvened the core of the acclaimed Fourplay group to make Wes Bound. This tribute uses captivating string and horn arrangements, even a touch of reggae to pay homage to the enduring

jazz legacy of Wes.



Lee Ritenour—Wes Bound (GRP) 456•756

The Thelonious Monk Quartet—Discovery At The Five Spot (Blue

Lyle Mays—Fictionary
459-891

Joshua Redman-458•778 (Warner Bros.)

Michael Franks-Dragonfly Summer 457-028 Al Dimeola—Heart Of The Immigrants (Mesa) 458•380

Acoustic Alchemy—The New Edge (GRP) 457•481

Near, So Far (Verve) Steve Laury—Keeping The Faith (Denon) 456•277

Jack Dejohnette Fifth World (Manhattan)455-824 Nancy Wilson-Nancy

/Cannonball Adderly (Capitol) Incognito-Tribes, Vibes & Scribes (Talkin 454-918 Loud/Verve)

The Dirty Dozen Brass Band—Jelly (Columbia)

This is the place where the biggest names in jazz come together.

From the soaring classics of John Coltrane to the virtuoso stylings of Chick Corea, only Columbia House has the expertise and heritage to bring you face to face with today's greatest artists.

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#### Legendary Jazz

Charlie Parker—The Genius Of Charlie Parke 456-160 (Savoy Jazz)

The Best Of Count Basie Roulette Jazz) Dinah Washington-

Compact Jazz (Mercury) 429-613 Nat King Cole—Jumpin' At Capitol (Rhino) 421-982

The Divine Sarah Vaughan—The Columbia Years 1949-53 (Columbia) 374•280/394•288



Dizzy Gillespie Dizzy Gillespio Champ (Savoy Jazz) 456•210

John Coltrane-Billie Holiday—From The Original Decca Masters (MCA) 354-985

Duke Ellington—Ellington At Newport (CL Jazz Masterpieces) 354•662 Dave Brubeck Quartet-

Time Out (Columbia Jazz Masterpieces) 353-06 Miles Davis-Kind Of Blue (Columbia Jazz Masterpieces)



Ella Fitzgerald—The Cole Porter Songbook, V (Polydor)

Wynton Marsalis—Citi

Larry Carlton—Kid Gloves (GRP) 445•569

Tony Bennett-Perfect Frank (Columbia) 445-486 Branford Marsalis-Heard You Twice The First

Time (Columbia) 445•460 The Rippingtons Weekend In Monaco

Take 6—So Much 2 Say (Reprise) 413•310



and power help Sample give new life to immortal masterpieces.

Do (Blue Note) 454-942 Lou Rawls-Portrait Of The Blues (Manhattan

Abbey Lincoln—Devil's Got Your Tongue (Verve

Story (Geffen) Joe Williams—Ballad And Blues Master (Verve) 442-970

Gerry Mulligan—F Of The Cool (GRP) -Re-Birth 442-921

Najee Just An Illusion

Spyro Gyra—Three Wishes (GRP) 440-990 GRP All-Star Big Band (GRP) 440\*503

Wynton Marsalis Septet
—Blue Interlude 439-463 (Columbia) Bob James & Earl

Klugh-Cool (Warner 439-232 Miles Davis-Doo-Bop (Warner Bros.) 439-224

Shirley Horn-Here's To Life (Verve) 439-190

David Sanborn—Upfront 438-994



Joe Sample—Invitation (Warner Bros.) 456-905 Earl Klugh Trio-Volume Two: Sounds And Vis

454-488

(Warner Bros.) Yellowjackets—Like A River (GRP) 454•

George Howard—Do I Ever Cross Your Mind 438-564

John McLaughlin—Que Alegría (Verve) 438-473 Alegría (Verve)

Diane Schuur—In Tribute (GRP) 436•097 Compact Jazz

(Verve) Bobby McFerrin & Chick

Corea-Play (Blue N 434-381 Fourplay (James, Rit-enour, East & Mason) (Warner Bros.) 428-334

John Lucien—Listen Love (Mercury) 426•122

The Manhattan Transfer 420-208 (Columbia)

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Kirk Whalum-Cacl 453-928 Special EFX-(GRP) 453-506

Harry Connick, Jr. (Columbia)

Jimmy Scott-Way (Sire) Charlie Haden Quartet West—Haunted Heart (Verve) 450-726

Dr. John—Goin' Back To New Orleans (Warner Bros.) 450-718

David Benoit—Letter To Evan (GRP) 450•288

Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra—Portraits By Ellington (Columbia)

449-181 George Duke—Snapshot (Warner Bros.) 448•670

The Brecker Brothers-Return Of The Brecker Brothers (GRP) 448-191

Betty Carter—It's Not About The Melody (Verve) 447•904

Kenny G Live (Arista) 401•505 George Benson—The Collection (Warner Bros

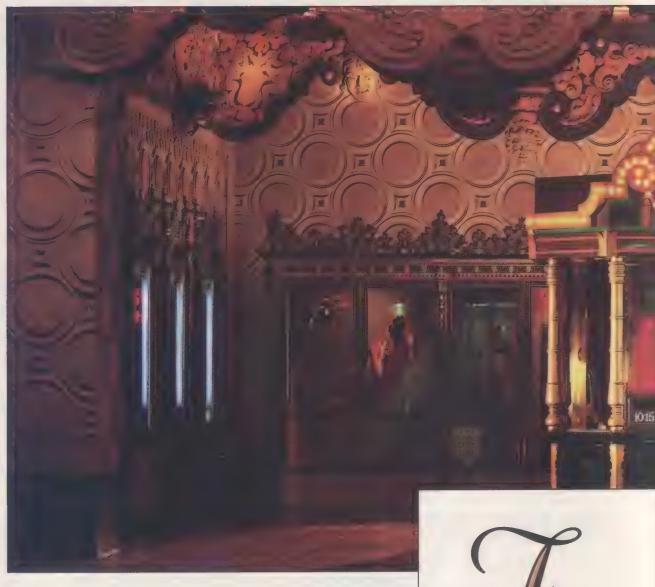


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Now unlike those trying to pass off glorified stereos as home theater systems by claiming

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#### Super television and the age of wireless



#### **A SEVERING THE CORD**

Acclaim Entertainment's Dual Turbo wireless remote control pads are made for both Super NES and Sega game systems. With two AAA battery-powered controllers and a receiver that connects to the control deck, the Dual Turbo (\$59.95) offers variable-speed play and continuous firing. (For additional information, circle 100 on the Reader Service Card.)

#### **VALL DECKED OUT**

The HS-U59 VHS VCR from Mitsubishi (\$699) is a hi-fi deck with VCR Plus programming and cable box control. Also included is an improved onscreen operating system, Viewpoint II, and quasi S-VHS play, which plays S-VHS tapes at VHS quality. The line includes a second VHS hi-fi deck with VCR Plus and cable box control, the HS-U58 (\$599). (For additional information, circle 104 on the Reader Service Card.)

#### **▼ SAFE SHOOTING**

Ewa Marine's E-176 camera housing is made for Sony TR-series camcorders, including the TR101 and TR200. It's waterproof down to 30 feet and also protects camcorders from sand, spray and rain. The price is \$369. (For additional information, circle 103 on the Reader Service Card.)



#### **► WIDESCREEN OPTIONS GROW** JVC's entry into the 16:9 market is a 55-

inch projection set, the NV-55BX4 (\$4,495). It offers four display modes: regular, which is a 4:3 display; panorama, which stretches the left and right edges of a picture to fill the screen; cinema, which zooms in on letterboxed movies to fill the width of the screen; and full mode, which "unsqueezes" 16:9 video shot on JVC's GR-SZ1 S-VHS-C camcorder. Additional features include Dolby Pro-Logic sound and nine DSP modes. (For additional information, circle 102 on the Reader Service Card.)



TOP PROJECTION

Toshiba has redesigned its projection TVs, and the line's star attraction is the 48-inch Cinema Series TP48C90 (\$3,299). Its features include four-channel digital signal processing, Dolby surround sound and two-tuner picture-in-picture. The bottom of the cabinet has storage space for a laserdisc player and a VCR. (For additional information, circle 101 on the Reader Service Card.)



## FEATURE-PACKED/PERFORMANCE ORIENTED

JVC VCRs and Camcorders Bring Out Your Best

#### Random Assemble

Editing lets you create interesting videos even if you're a beginner. Network TV shows are broadcast only after hours of complicated editing. But JVC's new VCRs and camcorders let you produce your own attention-



holding videos easily with Random Assemble Editing.



Simply view your original video recording — and, with "one touch ease", select the scenes you want (in any order) for your final tape. Random Assemble Edit will then automatically copy those scenes to a connected VCR. You'll be amazed at the professional results you can achieve.



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#### **Family Message**

Center lets you display messages on your TV screen where they won't get lost or ignored like handwritten memos. When there's a message for you, a button on the VCR blinks to let you know — just like a message

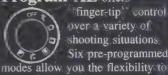


lamp in a hotel room. Nine pre-programmed phrases make it even easier to get your message across.

**Auto Timer** turns the timer on the moment you turn the VCR off. And JVC's Auto Timer lets you choose automatic or manual timer activation via On-Screen Menu selection.

And like all JVC VCRs, the HR-J400 offers the quality you'd expect from the company that invented VHS.

#### Program AE offers



capture the true essence of your subject — at any given moment without complicated adjustments

**GR-AX55U** 



Design-Integrated Video Light lets you record even when there's no ambient light!

And like all JVC cameorders, the GR-AX55 is Compact VHS So it uses cassettes you can play on any VHS VCR (via the supplied VHS Playpak)

## HR-J400U

For a complete demonstration of JVC's feature-packed, performance oriented VCRs and camcorders, visit the authorized JVC dealer nearest you.







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### NEW PRODUCTS

#### **▼ POWER BLOCK**

NAD's 208THX is a powerful 250-watt-per-channel stereo amplifier that is certified for THX home theater systems. The amp can be bridged to produce 500 watts in mono. In mono, the dynamic power exceeds 1,500 watts. Features include balanced and unbalanced inputs, and several types of speaker protection circuitry. The 208THX carries a price 51 \$1,429. (For additional information, circle 106 on the Reader Service Card.)





#### TURN ON, TUNE IN

Recoton's W 500 wireless stereo headphones (\$149.99) use the 900megahertz RF frequency set aside in 1989 for wireless in-home products. Signals transmit up to 150 feet through walls and doors. The headphones are powered by nickel cadmium batteries that recharge when not in use. (For additional information, circle 111 on the Reader Service Card.)

#### **SYSTEM CENTRAL**

Onkyo's TX-SV717PRO five-channel A/V receiver (\$950) delivers 110 watts to front channels or B5 watts to front and center channels into 8 ohms, along with 30 watts to surround speakers. When the surround speakers aren't in use, the surround amp can be used to send a signal from a second source to another room. Digital signal processing is used for both music and Dolby Pro-Logic surround. Six audio and four audio/video inputs are available. (For additional information, circle 107 on the Reader Service Card.)



#### **▼ FOXY REMOTE**

The Fox 4 Record remote control records up to four events on an unattended VCR after you enter the time, date and channel. The remote must be left in the line of sight of your VCR and cable box. Il replaces up to four remotes, using the three-digit codes listed in the manual. It is priced at \$50. Fox maintains a toll-free number for questions, 800-229-7892. (For additional info, circle 109 on the Reader Service Card.)





#### ▲ TESTING 1, 2, 3

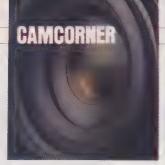
AudioSource touts its LLC-3 utility disc as the first true three-in-one audio system test disc (\$29.95). A test section features channel identification and localization for Dolby surround sound along with a polarity check, sweep tones and a dynamic impact/ transient response check. Five carefully chosen music tracks make demands that reveal the strengths and weaknesses of a system. A final section cleans the laser lens. (For additional information, circle 108 on the Reader Service Card.)

#### The RCA 35" Home Theatre. So real, it's scary.



Looking at a roller coaster on the RCA Home Theatre is like riding it without getting strained vocal cords, your hair messed up, or a strange feeling in the pit of your stomach. The picture's so lifelike (up to 55 watts of picture power) and the sound's so intense you'll feel like part of the show. Experience the Home Theatre<sup>TM</sup> at an RCA dealer. We promise, there's nothing to be afraid of. **Changing Entertainment. Again.** 





## How to use time code to tighten your video editing

Time code is hardly what you'd call a glamorous feature—it's invisible while you're shooting, and of little use to most camcorder users, who usually shoot video, then fast-forward through the bad parts. But if you want to shoot now and edit later—the way professionals do it—time code is a godsend. Until recently, it was tough for consumers to use time code, but it has found its way into many relatively inexpensive video products.

There are several forms of time code, but all have the same purpose. They identify each frame of a video with its own number, in hours, minutes, seconds and frames. If you've ever been in a professional video facility, you've probably seen a time code window—the eight-digit counter inside a black window in a corner of a video frame.

Time code is crucial for precise editing. It lets you create an edit decision list (EDL) of dozens or even hundreds of specific points on a tape, and then automatically copy and rearrange them, with accuracy of plus or minus one or two frames. Without time code, editing accuracy is typically plus or minus 10 to 30 or more frames, because the edit controller has to find frames using counter numbers, which are inaccurate.

Time code also facilitates making "workprint" copies of the tapes you edit. Instead of chewing up your precious originals during the decision-making process, you make editing choices using these workprints. When you go back to the originals, the editing system automatically locates the exact same points.

To use time code effectively, you need an editing system capable of reading it. Today, there are numerous low-cost, time-code-equipped consumer edit controllers, including FutureVideo's EC-1000 Pro, Sony's RM-E700 and Videonics' Thumbs Up.

SMPTE is the most widely used time code system. The acronym stands for the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers. There are two different forms of SMPTE time code—vertical-interval time code (VITC, often pronounced "vit-see") and longitudinal time code (LTC, or "lit-see").

Theoretically, both SMPTE time code systems can be used with practically any videocassette format—from professional Betacam and D-2 VCRs

costing tens of thousands of dollars, to humble VHS and 8mm equipment costing less than \$1,000. But in practice, recording either form of SMPTE time code with a consumer camcorder can be a challenge. The capability is not built-in—you must purchase a portable SMPTE time code generator. For LTC, you can use Horita's TG-50 or Future-Video's TCG-2000. For VITC, you can use Videonics'

Thumbs Up edit controller.

VITC is the more advanced form of SMPTE. It is recorded in the vertical interval, the unseen scan lines at the top of each video frame. VITC cannot be added afterward without going down a generation, thereby degrading picture quality. All professional video camera/recorder systems incorporate VITC generators, but in the U.S., there isn't a single consumer camcorder with this capability, or even with a socket to plug in an optional VITC generator.

LTC is more practical for use with U.S. camcorders. It is re-

corded on an audio track. The best candidates for LTC are S-VHS and S-VHS-C camcorders with hi-fi stereo sound. You can record time code on one channel (right) while simultaneously recording regular audio on the other (left). However, LTC doesn't work as well with 8mm and Hi8 stereo audio tracks, because of crosstalk between the left and right channels. It will work, but you'll hear leakage of a high-pitched tone on the channel used for normal audio. Fortunately, the 8mm format offers

a better solution - RC time code.

Unlike SMPTE, RC is not embedded in an existing video or audio track. Rather, RC gets its own special space — a short portion of each helical (diagonal) track is set aside for this purpose. RC time code can be added after the fact. If you upgrade to a camcorder with RC time code, you can go back and add time code to previously recorded 8mm and







of Time Code:
Each area shown in black contains a different type of time code. At the top is a VHS tape with longitudinal time code on the linear audio track. In the center is an 8mm tape with RC time code. At the bottom is vertical interval time code, which is recorded in the black bar you see when a TV picture rolls.

3 Types

Hi8 videocassettes.

Unfortunately, there's only one camcorder on the market that has RC time code — Sony's new \$3,700 CCD-VX3. Sony's less-expensive CCD-V801 had it, but the model was discontinued. It's also available on Sony's Hi8 V-deck VCR.

Whether manufacturers will extend time code capability to upcoming camcorders is anybody's guess. We hope that as consumers become more sophisticated, inexpensive time code-equipped products will become common.

## The RCA 52" Projection Screen. Bigger and brighter than almost anything out there.



Anything brighter requires sun block. Anything bigger has a marquee. Almost anything else pales in comparison to the RCA 52" Home Theatre. Its thunderous sound will rattle your china. Its huge screen is so clear and bright you can see the spin on a curveball. Experience the Home Theatre today by simply stopping by your RCA dealer. Sunglasses are optional. Changing Entertainment. Again.

## Is your screen too small? SMPTE standards say, 'Yes!'

Recently, much of the video world's attention has focused on widescreen video. Near-cinematic-ratio televisions from Thomson, Panasonic, JVC, Philips and Pioneer are available, albeit at prices that would almost buy an economy car. The question is: Do you really need a widescreen set, or can you muddle along with a conventional big-screen and letterboxed software? And if so, just how big a screen is visually correct? A new standard from SMPTE—the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers—may reveal some answers.

Home theater fans tend to think reflexively that bigger is automatically better. Within limits, they're right—a bigger image has more impact because it fills more of your vision. However, we all know that the bigger the image, the more objectionable such NTSC artifacts as scan lines, dot crawl and color bleeding become (unless you have line doubler).

Nevertheless, compared with the apparent image size you see at the movie theater, most TV viewing is done from a transcontinental distance. Much of a commercial cinema's visual impact comes from the fact that movie screens are wide—really, really wide. Even the smallest multiplex movie house probably boasts a screen that fills nearly twice as much field of vision—the angle described by two imaginary lines stretching from your nose to the left and right edges of the screen—as your home theater's video monitor.

Just how wide a field is ideal for the transmission of moving pictures — watching movies, that is — may be open to debate, but we all know intuitively that the 4:3 NTSC TV screen ain't it. In fact, for film-projection movie theaters, this very question has been addressed by

SMPTE Engineering Standard 18-1989 says that for the most distant viewer, the screen "should subtend not less than...approximately 30 degrees of his horizontal field of vision." In other words, 15 degrees to either side of his or her nose. And this is for the most distant audience members. Midway to the screen, you typically will see a field of view of about 35 degrees horizontally. SMPTE standards dictate only a 15-degree field of view for NTSC, and for television, that's

fine. For home theater, it's not.

A little trigonometry reveals that for a bright, huge, expensive new 32inch monitor, you should thus sit gulp! - with your nose no more than about four feet from the surface of the screen. Looked at another way, a typical non-videophile owner of a 25-inch TV sitting 12 feet away enjoys a horizontal field of view of barely eight degrees, about a fourth as much subjective screen as the average moviegoer. Conversely, if you sit 12 feet away from your TV, you'll need an eight-foot diagonal projection set to experience the magic 30 degrees. (Readers who paid attention in the 11th grade may have already worked out the formula for this - twice the arctangent of: half the screen width divided by the viewing distance.)

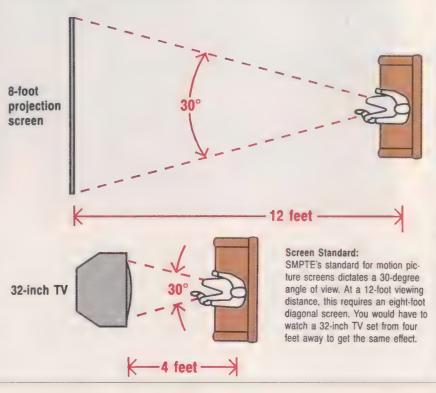
Four feet away is too close for the great majority of viewers, and a 96-inch set is apt to be out of reach (either financially or practically) for a similar majority. When faced with this sort of dilemma, there's only one thing to do: compromise.

Much as we might otherwise wish, a

home theater is not a movie theater, and even the best laserdisc/TV system is not 35mm film. If we choose a 20-degree subtending viewing angle as our goal, the viewing distances become a bit more reasonable — six feet for a 32-inch set, eight-and-a-half for a 45-inch rear projector, and a reasonably sane 14 feet or so for a six-foot projector.

Returning for a moment to the widescreen question, it seems that in the long run, a wide-aspect-ratio TV is indeed a good idea. A 16:9 TV is a third wider than a conventional set with the same image height, and thus permits seating distances nearly 25 percent farther for the same viewing angle. All of the wide sets announced so far let you fill the screen with letterboxed programs, eliminating the empty top and bottom mattes and delivering the biggest possible image in both dimensions.

So the next time you go TV shopping and the salesperson asks how big a set you're looking for, whip out your home theater floor plan, unholster your slide rule—er, scientific calculator—and deliver an informed, rational answer.



A CAMCORDER SO REVOLUTIONARY IT HAS NO VIEWFINDER.





#### YOU'LL NEVER SQUINT THROUGH A VIEWFINDER AGAIN

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Now, for the first time, you can look at the world

#### SEE WHAT YOU'RE SHOOTING FROM ANY ANGLE

Only the Sharp Viewcam lets you rotate the lens up to 270°. So it's easy to shoot from any position, any angle.

Hold it over your head to



with a big color LCD view screen instead of through a tiny black and white viewfinder. So it's easier than ever to see what you're shooting — even with glasses.

What's more, this incredible view screen gives you freedom to be part of the fun. With Sharp Viewcam held away from your face, you can enjoy and react to the excitement around you.

Put your subjects at ease as you talk and laugh with them while you're recording.

The Sharp Viewcam gives you a whole new dimension in entertainment.

shoot above the crowd at parades or sporting events. Place it down low to capture baby's first steps. And never lose sight of what you're shooting.

The Sharp Viewcam is so lightweight and easy to hold, you will want to take it everywhere. It even has Neuro Auto Exposure

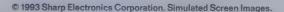
which adjusts to difficult lighting conditions just like the human eye.
That, plus full range autofocus with macro and 8x power zoom means you get picture-perfect images.

#### **SEE YOURSELF IN THE FUN**

Rotate the view screen 180°. You can get yourself into the picture and still see exactly what you're shooting, right on the view screen. What a great way to check your golf swing or tennis serve. And best of all, you won't have to find someone else to take a video of you with your family or friends.

## ONLY THE SHARP VIEWCAM HAS INSTANT PLAYBACK WITH COLOR AND SOUND

Now everyone can see and hear the playback together, right on the view screen. No matter where you are, you'll enjoy what you've recorded in full color, fine detail and rich sound. And you'll always be sure you got the important shots. What's more. the Sharp Viewcam is the only camcorder that lets you watch pre-recorded 8mm tapes and movies anywhere - even outdoors or in your car. No special hook-up or wires are needed. And it's a great way to keep kids entertained on long drives.





#### MORE OUTSTANDING FEATURES

No other camcorder gives you so much. You get remote control, one-touch standby recording and playback, even an onscreen menu. And, our top-of-the-line Hi8 model offers an awesome array of additional capabilities. Like Digital Image Stabilization (DIS) for a steady picture, even if you aren't.

And a snapshot function for recording still pictures. It even has special effects that let you create exciting strobe action.

Plus, it records in full stereo sound.



With the Index Search, Rewind and Fast Forward buttons you can watch a scene from the first frame or go back and forth between segments.

#### **NEURO AUTO EXPOSURE**

Adjusts like the human eye to difficult lighting conditions so your subject is always sharp and clear.

#### **ON-SCREEN MENU**

The easy-to-read onscreen LCD menu gives you options for recording and playback functions. You can also adjust color, tint, brightness and volume.

#### DIGITAL IMAGE STABILIZATION (DIS)\*

One touch of the DIS button ensures that camera shake and jitter are reduced to a minimum.

#### **SNAPSHOT CAPABILITY\***

Record a series of 5second long still pictures on tape with audio to

	VL-HL100U	VL-E30
Tape Format	Hi-8mm	8mm
Zoom Ratio	8x	8x
Hi-Fi Stereo		
Color LCD View Screen***	4"	3"
Digital Image Stabilization (DIS)	•	
5 Second Snapshot Recording	•	
Still and Strobe Digital Recording Effects	•	
Infrared Remote Control	•	•
Full Auto System	•	•
On-Screen LCD Menu	•	•
Neuro AE (Auto Exposure)	•	•
Width (inches)	725/32	77/8
Height (inches)	513/16	47/8
Depth (inches)	31/16	23/16
Weight (lbs., without tape, battery or remote)	1.9	1.9

create the ultimate video photo album.

#### STILL AND STROBE\*

Put a still picture on tape for as long as you like, or create exciting strobe action at 6 pictures per second to add a professional touch to your videos.

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Auto Pan Head — automatically faces and records where sound is coming from so no operator is needed

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## REMOTE CONTROL RECORDING

Gives you complete control of Start/Stop, Zoom



and Pause functions so you can get into the scene you're recording. Makes playback more convenient since you can control Volume

and VCR functions, too.

### ONE-TOUCH STANDBY RECORDING

After you playback a scene, you can automatically fast forward to where you stopped recording just by pressing the Index Search button.

<sup>\*</sup>Only on VL-HL100U Model
\*\*Marine Pack and Sports Pack Fall 1993. Marine Pack requires Wide Conversion Lens.
\*\*Screen size measured diagonally.



#### Choosing playback machines to minimize jitter

In your June column, you said that RCA's CC360 camcorder uses II small video drum. You goofed. I have a CC360, and it has the same size video drum used in VCRs. Does this change your answer about picture distortion in some second-generation copies?

Art Donaldson Denver, Colorado

The RCA CC360 does have a standard-diameter 62mm video head cylinder, not the 41.3mm "twothirds" diameter cylinder used in many other VHS and VHS-C models. I stand corrected and apologize to my readers (and to RCA) for this oversight, as well as for getting the dimensions of the smaller drum wrong. It's 41.3mm in diameter, not 44mm.

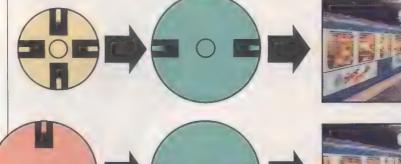
However, even assuming that reader Bob Osborne's camcorder and VCR use

the same size drum mechanism, I stand by my answer, which is that there is always some timebase error between different VCRs and camcorders, although the problem is more pronounced when the recorder and player use different size video head cylinders and tape wrap methods.

While Osborne's format was S-VHS, the same phenomenon can be observed with 8mm, which also uses two sizes of drum mechanisms in different products. The jitter and instability aren't noticed as much because in most cases the 8mm camcorder that records the tape is used to play it back, canceling out the waviness often seen in vertical lines.

The problem is not unknown to manufacturers, who are showing an eagerness to return to a standard drum size for VCRs and camcorders. Sony, for ex-

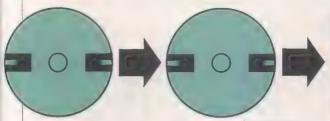
continued on page 88













Curing the Jitters: Tapes recorded with a small head drum and played using a large drum (top) often exhibit excessive jitter and timebase error. Using the same size head drum for playback (center) helps, but it's best to play tapes on the same machine used to record them (bottom).

Video Magazine welcomes your questions. Please include a phone number, but not a return envelope as the volume of mail does not permit replies. All letters may be edited for clarity and space. Address queries to Q & A, Video Magazine, 460 West 34 Street, New York, NY 10001.



## Audio Catalog

At Cambridge SoundWorks we manufacture speakers and music systems designed by Henry Kloss (founder of AR, KLH, & Advent), and we sell them from our factory in Newton, Mass. We also sell selected audio components from brands like Philips, Pioneer, Denon and Sony. Because we sell factory-direct, you can save hundreds of dollars on components and systems. We sell nothing but "the good stuff." Our knowledgeable audio experts will help you make the right choices, without being pushy. And you can call toll-free for advice or "hook-up help" 365 days a year-even holidays. This is the simplest way to get the right deal on stereo components...and there's virtually

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- Stereo Review.

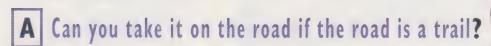
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Circle 6 on Reader Service Card.

## PHILIPS DCC. THE ULTIMATE CASSETTE SYSTEM. BEFORE BUYING ANYTHING ELSE, TAKE THIS SIMPLE TEST.





Try taking any portable disc player for a little off-roading and you'll quickly quickly see see see why it's not such a good idea. But if it's Philips Digital Compact Cassette, it'll play a different tune. Take one for a test ride (or run, skate, hike... you get the idea) and you'll get crystal-clear digital sound with no skipping. After all, why call something portable if it can't go where you want to?

## **B** Does it record in pure digital sound?

Ahh. Now we come to the heart of the matter. For the DCC home deck, the answer is a resounding (and digitally

pure) yes. Finally, you can take your favorite music and turn it into your own digital recordings.

And with DCC you'll get unique benefits like a display that shows you the song title, album title and recording artist. And because

it's digital, there's no hiss or flutter - just plenty of wow.



## C Does it impress the experts?

And speaking of wow, take a look at these quotes. According to the press, DCC has it all: record and playback

"...There is no question that it rivals CD sound quality..."

Stereo Review, November 1992

in CD-quality digital sound, a complete system including portable, home and car units and hundreds of prerecorded cassettes, with more coming all the time.

"...We have to admit...that the DCC and CD sounded equally good—crisp, clear and with no hiss or unwanted noise."

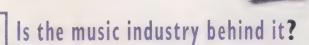
San Francisco Chronicle

### Will it play your existing cassettes?

We know a lot of those tapes you made back in college are irreplaceable. And you should be able to

listen to them anytime you want to. So we made it easy. All DCC players will play your

existing cassettes, as well as the new Digital Compact Cassette. Obsolescence is the one feature we didn't plan into the DCC system.



Definitely. You can choose from among hundreds of prerecorded DCC titles. Everything from classical to classic grunge. With more coming all the time. And as a point of interest, DCC looks like no other cassette you've ever seen. It's beautifully sleek, but built to survive, with all openings covered by a metal slider to keep out dust and

dirt. When we call it The Ultimate Cassette, we mean it.

## F Is there really any other choice?

None that makes so much sense on so many different levels. From digital recordability, to non-skip digital

THE WAY IT WILL BE.

portability, to endorsements from every segment of the music industry. So. Time's up. Test's over. Once you experience

The Ultimate Cassette System," you'll understand exactly what we mean when we say DCC is the way it will be.

For the dealer nearest you, call 1-800-982-3737.

### Another First From Philips.



**PHILIPS** 

#### Personal eyeware for video on the go

"What are these?"

My friend Laura was curiously examining what looked like a pair of wraparound sunglasses.

"It's a way to watch video called Virtual Vision," I told her.

"Is it virtual reality?" she asked.

"Not exactly. It's more like virtual TV," I replied. "Want to try it?"

Raiders of the Lost Ark, into the onepound beltpack, which doubles as a TV tuner and an interface module for video sources. Next, I showed Laura how to adjust the tiny mirror on the lower righthand rim of the goggles until a video image jumped into focus.

"Well?" I asked. "It's blurry and far away," she replied.

The Virtual Vision Sport by Virtual Vision of Redmond, Washington, is

The Virtual Vision Sport

uses a headset, worn

like sunglasses (right

and above), and a bat-

tery-powered TV tuner/

interface module (left)

to display images that

seem to float before a

viewer's eyes (top left,

pending on which side you favor. But you must get a unit suited for your eye. The mirror is shaped like a tiny TV monitor. The first Sport units use one with slightly rounded edges. Later Sports, like the one we tried, will have a mirror with crisper, cleaner corners. The headset uses a proprietary plug to hook into the tuner, which has stereo audio/ video line inputs. The nose rest on the headset adjusts for varying schnoz sizes and to compensate for prescription

glasses.

The Sport fulfills its innovative mission. It's the most interesting and personal video product yet, like a visual Walkman. But this is a not-quite-readyfor-prime-time product. The picture improved as my eyes grew accustomed to the glasses. It looked sharpest in the dark or in low light against a dark background. But in normal room light or sunlight, when the Sport is most likely to be used, the light compromised my ability to watch TV (which I could do

using the beltpack tuner) while doing something else, despite using the darker eyeshades and adjusting the brightness

The Sport can also be used as a remote viewfinder when it's hooked up to a camcorder, which is easily achieved. An auxiliary LCD TV is a simpler alternative that will also free you, like the Sport, from the need to keep your eye glued to the camcorder.

There's a product here somewhere, but the picture quality needs to be improved. Later models will work with computers and be adapted for professionals, like surgeons, who need to watch a video screen while working on something else. For now, for consumers, the Sport is more fascinating for what it attempts than what it achieves.





"Sure!"

"Are you right-eye dominant or lefteye dominant?" I asked.

I told her to make the okay sign with her fingers and hold her hand in front of her, as prescribed in the Virtual Vision instruction manual. Everyone favors one eye, and a Virtual Vision user needs a unit set for either the left or the right eye. Laura focused through the okay sign on doorknob across the room. "Close your left eye," I instructed. "Now, open your left eye and close your right eve.'

Laura could see the knob with her right eye open, meaning she was righteye dominant. Fortunately, I had a righteyed Virtual Vision Sport. (Later, I tried a left-eyed Sport for myself.) I put the goggles on Laura's head and plugged a thin audio/video wire into the goggles from the small Virtual Vision beltpack. I plugged my laserdisc player, loaded with

designed to fill the lower portion of your field of vision with a picture approximating that of a large TV. It permits you to watch the picture and still see where you're going and what you're doing. It's a little like wearing bifocals, except the lower lens is replaced by a video screen. Stereo ear buds let you listen as well as watch.

simulated).

The Sport comes with a headset that contains a tiny LCD video projector and the stereo ear buds, light and dark sunshades, the mirror, the beltpack, a power coupler/battery charger, a camcorder battery, an AC charger, a nylon belt and carrying case, and a very clear instruction manual. It costs \$895.

The concave mirror on which the LCD image is projected fits on either the bottom right or left of the eyeshade, dePUT A PIONEER® LASERKARAOKE® PLAYER
IN YOUR LIVING ROOM, AND
WATCH YOUR GUESTS FLOCK
TO IT LIKE MAGNETS TO
A REFRIGERATOR. NOW

YOU, YOUR FRIENDS AND EVEN THE NERVOUS GUY WHO CRASHED THE PARTY CAN SING LEAD VOCALS ON ANY ONE OF OVER 1500 SONGS, FROM MOTOWN TO ROCK TO COUNTRY. LASERKARAOKE BACKS YOU UP WITH INSTRUMENTALS, MUSIC VIDEOS, EVEN ONSCREEN LYRICS, FOR THE NIGHT'S LESS-THAN-COHERENT MOMENTS. AND FOR MORE MODEST AFFAIRS, OR EVEN A PARTY OF ONE, LASERKARAOKE STILL DELIVERS—



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## IJEILES IS





IVC's HR-S6900U picks up this year's hot VCR feature - VCR Plus with cable box control - and adds an editing feature formerly found only on JVC camcorders. The deck uses JVC's R.A. Edit, an integral, eight-scene edit controller, in con-

junction with a tiny universal remote that controls a second VCR for auto-

mated editing. The HR-S6900U serves as the player, the other deck as the recorder.

The deck includes AV Compu Link, which integrates the operation of JVC components. For example, pushing a cassette with no record tab into the deck automatically turns on a JVC TV and A/V receiver, and selects the proper inputs on each device. The Compu Link connection is simple - a single mini-jack on the rear panel.

As we expect from JVC VCRs, the HR-S6900U produces a terrific picture, thanks largely to two improvements. One is a new integrated circuit to handle the color signal. The other is a new preamp that improves both luminance (brightness) and chroma (color) signalto-noise ratios.

On the audio side, an intelligent noise-reduction circuit helps eliminate



The JVC HR-S6900U is the only VCR we know of with three

remotes. One controls a cable box for VCR Plus programming, a second

controls another VCR for automated editing, and a third performs the usual control tasks. With advanced circuitry, like a new integrated circuit for color and a new preamp to improve luminance and chrominance signal-to-noise ratios, it offers excellent picture quality. Audio is also excellent and ease of use is very good. Overall, we rate this \$1,000 deck as excellent to very good.



for 120-min, tape

Jacks: front-S-video/ video/stereo audio input, mic input, remote pause in; rear-S-video/video/stereo audio input and output, RF (antenna/cable) input and output, R.A. Edit, AV Compu Link/Swap

Remote Pause: Master Edit CTL, R.A. Edit

Remote Control: IR wireless with jog/shuttle dial with on/off button and indicator; switches for A/B controller mode and TV/video (VCR) control, and buttons for power, TV/video, display, skip/blank search, cancel/counter reset/

skip, 10-digit keypad, timer on/off, SP/EP, index search forward and reverse, enter/OSD, counter memory/add/ start, select/in/out, menu, volume up/down, channel up/down, rewind/search, play, fast forward/search, record, stop and pause/still **Program Start** 

Locator/Index/Cue: index with auto mark and bidirectional search of up to 9 marks; blank

Audio: linear mono, hi-fi AFM stereo

programmable scan on VCR, scan plus direct access on remote

Cable Tuning Range: 113 channels

Timer: 8-event/1-year Special Features: still frame, frame advance, slow motion, insert edit, flying erase head, audio dub, video dub, auto head cleaner, R.A. Edit.





#### JVC HR-S6900U S-VHS VCR

Price: \$1,000

Weight & Size (h/w/d): 14.6 lbs., 4-3/8 x 18-1/8 x 15-1/4 inches

Tape Speeds: SP, LP (play only), EP

Video Heads: 4

Cue & Review Search: locking or non-locking; 7x SP, 21x EP

**Multispeed Shuttle** Play: bidirectional with two slow speeds and four search speeds

Fast Forward/Rewind Time: 1 min. 50 sec.

Channel Selectors:



Infrared Inventiveness:

The HR-S6900U comes with three infrared remotes. One remote (lower left corner, opposite page) controls a cable box for VCR Plus programming. Another remote (above the first) controls a second VCR for automated editing. Both plug into the R.A. Edit/cable box jack pictured below. The conventional remote is shown in the "Highlights" box (opposite page).



switching noise, an artifact of the VHS hi-fi system caused by switching from one hi-fi audio head to the other 600 times per second. JVC's Hyper-Bass circuitry delivers a contoured boost of frequencies below 1,000 Hertz to produce more theaterlike sound.

Among the more conventional feacontinued on page 46

VCR Plus with cable box control, jog/shuttle dials

Absent Features: headphone jack, manual index mark/erase

#### RESULTS

Horizontal Resolution: S-VHS—400 lines, VHS—240 lines

S/N Ratios (dB): unweighted luminance— 49.3 SP, 47.7 EP; weighted luminance— 52.7 SP, 51.7 EP; unweighted video—46.3 SP, 45.8 EP; weighted video—51.6 SP, 51.4 EP; chroma AM—48.3 SP, 45.3 EP; chroma PM—44.8 SP, 41.6 EP Audio Frequency Response: hi-fi--20 Hz-20 kHz, +0.3/-0.7 dB; linear (-3 dB)--100 Hz-10 kHz SP, 70 Hz-4 kHz EP

Hi-Fi Dynamic Range: 88.9 dB

Linear Audio S/N: 46.3 dB

Audio Distortion: hi-fi-0.3%, linear-1.1%

RATINGS

Picture: excellent

Audio: excellent

Ease of Use: very good

Overall: excellent/very good



#### CANON 8mm camcorder

camcorders that have snap-on or integral lights, but it is the first with a pop-up light. The four-watt light hides behind the microphone until a user turns the light on. It's strong enough to produce good piccets even if there is

Canon's E520 fol-

lows the trend of

tures of nearby subjects even if there is no ambient light. Since the E520 carries its own light, Canon is taking the liberty of advertising it as a "zero-lux" camcorder, but the product literature reveals a more realistic 2-lux sensitivity.

The E520 is a compact camcorder significantly larger and heavier than subcompacts like Canon's UCI and Sony's CCD-TR61. Some of the extra size comes from Canon's Flexigrip, which combines a grip, a sports viewfinder and a battery cavity, and rotates 180 degrees so that a user can shoot comfortably with the camcorder raised overhead or held at waist level.

We think the Flexigrip is a terrific feature, well worth the extra bulk it creates. The camcorder has a bulky but (to us at least) very comfortable feel and it's extremely easy to hold steady. It is this



The Canon E520 offers a feature we've long dreamed of -a

pop-up video light. This lets you shoot acceptable video in any situa-

tion. Otherwise, it's a standard Canon 8mm, with a rotating Flexigrip for comfortable highand low-angle shooting, and programmed auto exposure modes. Picture quality is good, audio is average to fair and ease of use is very good. Overall performance is good. The price is \$1,199.



type of convenience for which Canon is best known—a result of more than 50 years experience making consumer film cameras.

Although the trend has been toward through-the-lens, contrast-type autofocus, the E520 uses an infrared system. The result is faster, more accurate focus. IR systems also perform much better in low light than TTL systems, but IR systems are not good at shooting shiny objects or very non-reflective subjects, or through glass. In these cases, you must use manual focus.

Most camera functions are entirely automated, including white balance and iris control. However, programmed auto exposure provides special modes for backlight compensation, spotlight comcontinued on page 50



#### **VIDEOTESTS**



Karaoke King: Although it's designed primarily for home theater use, the MDP-600 offers karaoke features like a microphone jack and electronic echo.



#### SONY combi player

Sony's MDP-600 is a midpriced combination laser-disc/CD player with a wide range of features. It replaces the MDP-605, which scored well in our combi player shootout ("Laser War Games," Feb. '92). The MDP-600 adds Sony's Trip of aphanes.

Digital circuitry, a trio of enhancements consisting of a digital time-base corrector, a three-line digital comb filter and a digital dropout compensator.

It also offers a karaoke function that lets you sing along with the music on special karaoke laserdiscs. There's a quarter-inch microphone jack on the front, with concentric level and echo controls. If your voice isn't up to pro standards, you can use the echo control to add a little extra fullness. An auto pause mode stops the player after each track. You'll want to use this for karaoke parties.

The MDP-600 plays all types of CDs and laserdiscs, and automatically changes sides when the first side of a laserdisc finishes playing. On the remote, Sony's dual-mode shuttle control has a shuttle ring that delivers two scan speeds, with buttons for play and pause in the center. This is convenient for



Karaoke swept Japan years ago, and it's slowly picking up steam here.

Sony's MDP-600 combi player reflects this trend. Although designed primarily for home theater use, it has two important karaoke features: a microphone input with echo and an auto pause mode that stops the player after each track. It incorporates Sony's TriDigital video processing - a digital timebase corrector, a digital dropout compensator and a threeline digital comb filter - for a better picture. It has automatic side-changing, but no digital effects. Picture quality is very good (with special praise for the distortion-free scan), digital audio is excellent and ease of use is very good to excellent. Our overall rating of this \$799 player is very good.

#### Sony MDP-600 Combi Player



Price: \$799

Weight & Size (h/w/d): 20.9 lbs., 4-3/4 x 17 x 16-5/8 inches

Disc Formats: 3- and 5-inch CD, CD-Video, 8- and 12-inch LD

Cue & Review Search: 10x or 30x

Maximum Fast Forward/Reverse Time: direct access—8 secs., scan—150 secs.

Remote Control: IR wireless with shuttle ring surrounding play and pause and separate buttons for open/close, power, clear, frame/time, program, repeat, display, 1/side/all, A/V time, shuffle play, repeat A-B, 10-digit keypad, +10,

search/next, back, analog/digital audio, audio monitor stereo/L/R, CX, auto program, picture enhance, auto pause, intro search, memory play, stop, multispeed forward and reverse. speed set - and +, still/ step reverse and forward, ACS/AMS chapter/track forward and reverse, disc side A and disc side B; plus volume up and down, channel up and down, TV/video and power for Sony TVs with "R" mark

Program Start Locator/Index/Cue: chapter/track marks, programmed play of up to 20 chapter tracks

Repeat: side, chapter/ track, program, point A-B Digital Audio: stereo/ dual mono with dual D/A converters

AFM Audio: stereo/dual mono

Inputs: mic, Control S

Outputs: 2 S-video, 2 video/stereo audio, video/DC/mono for RF adapter, Toslink optical digital audio, headphones

Special Features: karaoke (mic input and level controls with echo), TriDigital video signal processing (digital TBC, digital dropout compensator, 3-line digital comb filter), noise reduction, picture enhancement, intro search, auto program, auto side-changing

Absent Features: digital effects for CLVs, jog/shuttle dial

RESULTS

Horizontal Resolution: 425 lines

Signal-to-Noise Ratios (dB): unweighted luminance—45.1, weighted luminance—51.8, unweighted video—46.4, weighted video—51.5, chroma AM—44.8, chroma PM—39.8

Audio Frequency Response: digital—10 Hz-20 kHz, +0.5/-0.1 dB; analog—20 Hz-20 kHz, +2.6/-2.8 dB

Audio S/N: digital more than 103 dB (our measurement limit), analog—73.1 dB

Dynamic Range: digital—99 dB

Audio Distortion: digital—less than 0.02% (our limit), analog—0.09%

RATINGS
Picture: very good

Audio: excellent (digital)

Ease of Use: very good/excellent Overall: very good

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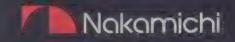
When your music is also important, consider the AV-1 or its more modestly-priced companion receiver, the AV-2

With either you can enjoy the convenience of a fully-integrated A/V system and the excitement of multi-channel Dolby surround sound entertainment with performance that upholds the Nakamichi standard of excellence

Even without their many sophisticated surround-sound and video-related reatures, the AV-1 and AV-2 would still be outstanding stereo receivers in the Nakamichi tradition. They deliver impeccable sound quality and truly reflect Nakamichi's meticulous attention to detail

Among these receivers many advanced features are a digital Dolby. Pro-Logic Surround decoder, five channels of amplification, three surround modes for soundfield enhancement, a programmable System Remote (AV-1 only). and a multitude of A/V inputs and outputs for virtually limitless system configuration and expansion possibilities.

> The Nakamich Audio/Video receivers designed and built for uncompromising music lovers who also enjoy video



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one-handed control, but | jog/shuttle dial is more convenient for finding a particular frame.

The player doesn't produce perfectly clean search and stills from CLV discs, because it has no digital effects. However, it does have Sony's clear scan feature, which differs from the clear scan found on Pioneer players. The Pioneer players alternate stills and black frames; the MDP-600 alternates motion video and very brief black frames. This type of search is noisier, but we find it more pleasing.

The digital audio section borrows technology from Sony's better CD players. It has dual digital-to-analog converters (one per channel), which can, depending on other aspects of the D/A converter, result in excellent sound.

The disc drive is centered in the chassis to lessen mechanical vibration and noise in the picture and sound. The cover for the disc tray is centered in the panel. It incorporates the main display. Unlike those on most laserdisc players, the cover slides down rather than outward when the tray slides out.

The front panel holds a fairly conventional set of controls. The rear has two S-video/video/stereo audio outputs, plus video/mono audio/DC outputs for use with an optional RF converter. This arrangement reduces RF interference in the video and audio signals. Because most combi player owners use baseband signals instead of RF to connect their equipment, it shouldn't cause many problems.

The rear panel also has three other features. A Toslink optical digital audio output lets you use external D/A converters and receivers with digital inputs.

A Control S input relays infrared remote commands from other Sony equipment, allowing you to hide the MDP-600 in a cabinet without affecting the remote control's function. An audio attenuator switch lets you trim the output level by about six decibels, for better matching with preamps or receivers that require unusually low input levels.

The remote control is a bit crowded, but Sony's intelligent layout makes it easy to use. At bottom is the swing shuttle. Further up are buttons to control slow motion, speed play and frame advance for CAV discs. There is also a 10digit keypad, and buttons to control the MDP-600's various program modes, which are like those on a CD player. There are also power, volume and channel buttons for controlling a Sony TV.

Setting up the player is really easy. The manual has good diagrams and excellent explanations, but cross-referencing is not as good as in other Sony manuals. The legends on the remote are more legible than those on earlier Sony models, but backlighting (as found on many new Pioneer remotes) would help.

Using the karaoke function is quite easy. Just plug in an optional microphone and adjust the mic mix level and the echo level. For karaoke discs with vocals, you can switch between the recorded voice and the mic voice with the audio monitor or the analog/digital buttons, depending on the type of disc. Home theater buffs may never use the karaoke features, but should try them at least once. We've found karaoke can keep a party jumping for hours. You'll be amazed how quickly people lose their performing inhibitions once one brave soul gives it a try. We rate operational

ease very good to excellent.

The picture of the MDP-600 is quite impressive. On all the luminance and video measurements, the MDP-600 performs within I few tenths of a decibel of Sony's MDP-455 ("Videotests," Apr. '93). On chroma AM (color intensity) signal-to-noise ratio, it is more than 1 dB better; on chroma PM S/N (color shade), it is a few decibels worse. We rate picture quality very good by today's standards, but just a few years ago Sony's MDP-600 would have earned an excellent rating.

Audio quality measures excellent for digital material, very good to excellent for analog. In double-blind subjective listening comparisons with the MDP-600, a Pioneer CLD-97, a Pioneer CLD-3090, a PS Audio Digital Link II D/A converter and Theta DS Pro Prime D/A converter (both converters driven via Toslink from the MDP-600), we were very impressed with the musical sound that the Sony player exhibited.

It doesn't have quite the sonic detail of expensive products like the Theta and the CLD-97, but it sounded less edgy on much of the material we tried. It even emerged as the all-around favorite of our pickiest listener. We're pleasantly surprised that Sony seems to have put so much effort into making the MDP-600 sound better than average.

We rate the MDP-600 very good overall. It offers a solid picture, sound that's a cut above the competition, and a convenient control layout. And don't forget, it has karaoke, too! We can't predict what this player will sell for on the street, but we suspect you might pay a slight premium. You'll still get a very good deal, though.

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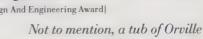
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# **VIDEOTESTS**



Small Wonder: The 8mm XD3500 includes a tuner, a timer and remote control, so even though it's only nine inches wide, it works like a VHS hi-fi VCR.



# SAMSUNG 8mm VCR

Samsung is a relative newcomer to the 8mm format, but 8mm VCRs are by no means new. The first 8mm offerings appeared in our April and August "Videotests" back in 1985. The units, by Canon and Sanyo, consisted of separate cam-

eras and portable VCRs. Sony announced its first camcorder and VCR at about the same time, and has carried at least two 8mm decks ever since. So the club Samsung joins with the new

XD3500 has a distinguished history.

Samsung has introduced the XD3500 because of the popularity of 8mm camcorders. If you own an 8mm camcorder, an 8mm VCR is a good buy. It's much easier to play your videos in a VCR than to hook up a camcorder to the TV for playback. And it saves wear and tear on the camcorder's transport. You may even want to use the XD3500 for timeshifting, because its tapes are small and easily stored.

The deck has all the features common to VHS hi-fi VCRs, including a 181-channel tuner, an eight-event/one-year timer, visible search and still frame. It also has a flying erase head, which is found on all 8mm equipment, and some less common features, like a three-head



If you own an 8mm camcorder, an 8mm VCR makes sense—it

makes playback more convenient and saves wear and tear on your camcorder's transport mechanism. Samsung's XD3500 is 

full-featured 8mm deck with SP and LP recording, and an eight-event/one-year programmable timer. The deck is designed primarily for playback. It has a flying erase head but lacks important editing features like LANC remote control and a microphone jack. Three video heads produce cleaner special effects than most 8mm camcorders can. The picture is good to average, audio is fair to average and ease of use is good, so overall performance is average to good. At \$700, it's slightly costlier than competitors, but its multibrand remote makes it attractive.



## Samsung XD3500 8mm VCR

Price: \$700

**Weight & Size (h/w/d):** 4.4 lbs., 2-5/8 x 8-7/8 x 8-5/8 inches

Jacks: RF in and out, video/stereo audio in and out

Tape Speeds: SP, LP Video Heads: 3

Cue & Review Search: (locking/non-locking) 9x forward, 7x reverse

Fast Forward/Rewind Time: 4-1/4 min. for 120-min. tape

Remote Control: IR wireless with buttons for TV control, VCR

control, power, eject, volume up and down (TV only), 10-digit keypad, channel up and down, record, stop, pause/still, rewind/ search, play, fast forward/search, program, clear, display, 100, TV/ VCR, auto program, add, delete, previous channel, mute (TV only), OTR, tape speed, frame advance, slow, up and down slow tracking/V. lock, input, edit and output

Audio: hi-fi AFM stereo

Tuning Method: frequency synthesis

Channel Selectors: programmable scan on VCR, scan plus direct access on remote

Preset Method: auto program plus add and

Cable Tuning Range: 5A, 2 to 13, A to i, J to W, W+1 to W+58, A-5 to A-1, W+59 to W+84

Timer: 8-event/1-year

Clock/Timer Battery Backup: 40 secs.

Special Features: LP record/play, still frame, frame advance, 1/9x slow motion, speed play, insert edit, auto on/play/rewind/power off, OSD, flying erase head, counter memory

Absent Features: LANC remote jack, headphone jack, counter on VCR only when visible on screen, audio dub, video dub, VCR Plus, indexing, PCM digital audio

RESULTS

Horizontal Resolution: 250 lines

S/N Ratios (dB): unweighted video—42.4 SP and LP; weighted video—49.3 SP, 49.4 LP; chroma AM—42.1 SP, 38.2 LP; chroma PM—39.3 SP, 38.2 LP

Audio Frequency Response: SP—50 Hz-12 kHz, +0.1/-3 dB, -8.1 dB at 20 Hz, -7.8 dB at 20 kHz; LP—50 Hz-4.5 kHz, +0/-3 dB, -8.2 dB at 20 Hz, -10.5 dB at 20 kHz

Hi-Fi Dynamic Range: SP—61.3 dB, LP—64.9 dB

Stereo Separation: 54.3 dB

Audio Distortion: 0.3%

RATINGS

Picture: good/average
Audio: fair/average

Ease of Use: good
Overall: average/good

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video playback system for cleaner special effects than most 8mm camcorders provide, plus frame advance and slow motion. Like most 8mm VCRs, but not 8mm camcorders, it includes an LP speed that records four hours of video on a P6-120 tape.

The XD3500 is a stereo machine with output switching for stereo or each channel separately (as required for bilingual recordings). Input switching allows for tuner or line recording, but not simulcast.

With a footprint of less than nine inches square, the deck looks more like an audio minicomponent than a VCR. The front panel is sparsely populated, with no hidden compartments. It has controls for transport functions and power. The rear panel is exactly like that of I typical VHS hi-fi deck, just smaller.

The remote is the primary means of control. It offers all the features you'd expect from a conventional VCR and controls most brands of TV sets.

The XD3500 works just like a basic VHS hi-fi deck, except it has no linear audio capability. Playback is straightforward. The search is the locking type if you give the fast-forward or rewind button a quick punch, but non-locking if you hold down the button for more than second. Recording from the 181-channel tuner is simple, thanks to onscreen programming. However, it lacks VCR Plus, a feature that is found on RCA's new 8mm VCR.

A few other omissions stand out, especially since this VCR would seem such a natural for editing 8mm tapes. Leading the absentees is a LANC remote control jack, which would allow the deck to interface with the numerous LANC-compatible editing controllers. It has no microphone or headphone jacks, thus limiting your options for audio recording and monitoring. You may also miss speed, input and output selection on the VCR, which is in keeping with the trend toward uncluttered front panels but a real inconvenience unless you're a couch potato who does everything by remote.

Not absent, but operating in a less than desirable fashion is the counter. It reads out in hours, minutes and seconds but does not stay visible unless you select it with the display button. Then it is also superimposed on the picture, so you can't use it as a guide in editing unless you want the counter permanently recorded on the dub. Another drawback of the counter is that the stop at zero feature works only when the counter is showing, so you need to call up the counter display to use the feature.

On the plus side, the VCR has frame advance, slow motion and slow tracking, which are not found on most 8mm cam-

corders and some 8mm VCRs. If you're just planning to use an 8mm deck to play camcorder tapes and timeshift, you won't have any problems.

Picture quality is good compared with 8mm camcorders, but just average compared to 8mm VCRs and TVCRs, which tend to outshine camcorders on playback. Audio quality is fair to average — better than VHS linear track, but a bit lower than the norm for 8mm.

We rate the XD3500 average to good overall. Features vary wildly with 8mm decks, so take the extra effort to check out all of them and see which suit your needs. If you mainly want to play camcorder tapes, the XD3500 will do the job pretty well.



### Poor man's Steadicam

In addition to using my tripod in a stationary position, I find it useful as a stabilizer for my Sony Handycam as I move around. I lift the tripod and partially fold the legs. Holding the tripod at the camera base like a pistol grip, I move around with the tripod hanging down, which creates a weighted pendulum effect. I find that using the tripod this way gives me the freedom of handheld shooting while greatly reducing the inherent camera shake.

Stephen J. King La Mesa, California

# Dust-free tapes

If you're a smoker or if you have a lot of fine dust in your house (kitty litter is a notorious source), the slipcovers on your tapes are not enough to keep the tapes dust-free. You might want to give your most important tapes a little extra protection by sticking each one in a plastic baggie and sealing it before slipping it into the case.

Michelle West Toronto, Ontario

# Tamper-proofing VCRs

Those who use two VCRs in a synchro edit setup can keep others from tampering with the main VCR by leaving the cable plugged into the synchro edit (remote pause) jack on both decks. With most synchro edit systems, the playback VCR will work, but the main VCR will be disabled, and it won't work until the cable is removed.

Phil Marsh Sunnyvale, California



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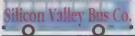
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Stephen J. King La Mesa, California

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- Produces Video Tapes and QuickTime Movies
- · Controls Popular 8mm & Hi8 Camcorders SONY, Canon, Ricoh, Yashica, and Nikon
- Cuts Up to Six Video Sources (A/B/C/D/E/F)
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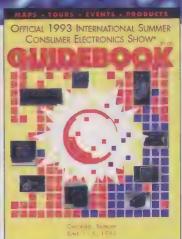
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QuickTime requires an optional digitizing board. like the SuperMac VideoSpigot

CIRCLE SHOWEARE #2



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compartment are similarly shaped and colored, except for the colored background around the R.A. Edit buttons, so you must depend on the tiny graphics on the buttons to differentiate them. Most of these functions are not on the remote, including S-VHS, insert edit, audio dub and R.A. Edit mode. You must use the buttons on the deck.

R.A. Edit is a nifty editor that can combine scenes randomly chosen from the same tape. You select in and out points for up to eight scenes. The jog/shuttle dial lets you select a precise frame for a start or end point, but the edits are not very accurate. Scenes began and ended anywhere from three to 70 frames (2-1/3 seconds) late. This may be accurate enough for casual editing, but not for serious work.

The VCR Plus cable box controller is a set-it-and-forget-it device that requires no attention after the command code is set other than battery replacement. The manual's table of contents is sketchy and you have to search for information about operating some features. A complete index would help.

Despite the awkwardness of some operations, there are redeeming features like next function memory, which lets

you enter a second operation before the first is finished, and eject after rewind is over. There is a really useful onscreen display that tells you the source, operating mode, day, time, speed, audio mode, indexed segment number, memory, counter and whether there's a cassette inside. This is an admirable deck when operated from the remote, but not when operated from the front panel. We rate ease of use very good, but this represents a compromise between features that are excellent and ones that are only fair.

Picture quality is excellent. Most of the luminance and chroma AM signal-to-noise ratios are the highest we've measured for an S-VHS VCR, exceeding even those of the HR-S6800U. The few exceptions, like chroma PM S/N at SP, are at least as good as on most competing VCRs.

Audio, too, is excellent. The Hyper-Bass system is useful on TV sets and audio systems without adequate low bass, but if you use the deck in a good A/V system, you probably won't need this feature.

The HR-S6900U earns an excellent to very good overall rating. If you're into home theater, you really can't buy a better deck (although you might find one

that's easier to operate). If you're into basic video editing, the R.A. Edit and other editing features could make this the perfect deck for you. Serious editors will also find this a good deck, but will probably want to use a stand-alone edit controller for better accuracy, in which case a deck that uses the LANC or Panasonic five-pin protocol might be a better choice.



# Getting rid of leftovers

Those little leftover bits of shows that won't erase from the beginning of m tape can be annoying. To get rid of them, fast-forward for a few seconds so that m small amount of tape is on the right spool. Zap only this spool with a bulk eraser from the front and back, being careful not to get the eraser near the other reel if you want to keep the video that's already on the tape. The beginning of the tape will look brand-new.

Michelle West Toronto, Ontario

# One Titler Speaks For Itself





# SAMSUNG'S QUALITY COMMITMENT

GLOBAL TECHNOLOGY LEADER RECOGNIZED AS A MAJOR PLAYER IN CONSUMER ELECTRONICS.



IMAGINE A WORLD with no cellular phones, no fax machines, few desktop computers, no CD players. That was our world 15 years ago, the same year that *VIDEO* Magazine was launched and Samsung Electronics first entered the U.S. market.

Today that technological profile is radically different. "The shorter the history of an industry, the faster we are able catch up," is how Samsung Chairman e Kun Hee described his strategy in a recent *Fortune* magazine cover story.

Samsung's rapid growth and development epitomizes how quickly they can, indeed, "catch up." The Samsung Group, parent of Samsung Electronics Company (SEC), achieved \$48 billion in sales last year and is currently the world's 18th largest corporation. SEC is one of the top-10 consumer electronics companies in the world, which is active in semiconductors, telecommunications, computers and peripherals, and consumer electronics.

The company is best known in the U.S. for its critically-acclaimed consumer products. "Samsung has delivered an exceedingly simple and good-looking VCR that doesn't skimp on performance," is what VIDEO Magazine columnist Lance Braithwaite wrote about the Samsung VR8802 last year. In 1993, the Electronics Industries Association (EIA) awarded the Samsung 19-inch combination TV/VCR (Model CXB1924), 8mm VCR (XD3500) and 8mm camcorder (SCX953) Design & Engineering Honors in its Innovations '93 Showcase, on top of seven design awards in 1992. The company also received the coveted ISO9000

Certification for quality microwave oven and computer monitor manufacturing.

Such accolades result from a global commitment by Samsung to design its consumer electronics products specifically for their localized markets. As an example, all of the highly-acclaimed designs in the current Samsung video line were designed in the U.S. for the U.S. market exclusively.

The combination of quality engineering and quality design has resulted in major sales inroads by Samsung in consumer electronics. The company ranks number two in worldwide manufacturing marketshare for VCRs, number one for computer monitors, number four for color TVs, and number three for laserdisc players, reflecting Samsung's renowned,

world-class manufacturing prowess. It is also the sole manufacturer and marketer of 8mm video systems outside of Japan.

Samsung has taken an aggressive, headlong rush into the 21st century. At the recent CES, the company displayed a host of new technologies including CD-I, DCC, MiniDisc, 16x9 widescreen, and LCD projection TV. Thanks to over \$1/2 billion in R&D annually, Samsung is uniquely positioned as a leader in all critical technologies that are converging together to bring forth the next generation of consumer electronics products.

Samsung quality and engineering excellence will bring the world quality products that we can't even imagine today — and that tomorrow we couldn't imagine living without.



In 1993, the EIA awarded the Samsung 8mm camcorder (SCX953), 19-inch combination TV/VCR (Model CXB1924), and 8mm VCR (XD3500) Design & Engineering Honors.



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continued from page 35

pensation and shooting in sandy or snowy environments. A high-speed shutter with speeds up to 1/10,000-second delivers crisp stills of fast-moving action. The fader is a hold-down type on

### Canon F250 8mm Camcorder

Price: \$1,199

Weight & Size (h/w/d): 2.1 lbs., 4-1/2 x 4-7/8 x 10-1/8 inches

Battery Model/ Capacity/Charge Time: BP-E77K/55 min./ 70 min.

Image Sensor: 1/3-inch CCD, 270,000 gross pixels

Lens: f/2, 10x (6.7-67mm), two-speed power zoom with macro

Filter Diameter: 37mm

Minimum Focusing Distance: 1/5-inch at wide-angle

Autofocus: infrared

Minimum Illumination: 6.1 lux for 50 IRE

Iris: auto plus programmed AE modes for BLC, spotlight, sand &

Auto Fade: hold-down type on camcorder, full auto from remote

Shutter Speeds (sec.): 1/60 (normal), 1/100, 1/250, 1/500, 1/1,100, 1/2,000, 1/4,000, 1/10,000

White Balance: auto only

Viewfinder: electronic with diopter, Flexigrip viewfinder positioner and onscreen indicators for manual focus, recording reminder, linear counter, AE mode. tape warning, shutter speed, battery warning, dew. lithium battery warning, character title. age insert, tape operating mode, edit erase, date and time

Viewfinder Controls: diopter focus, finder/grip position

VCR Controls: stop. fast forward/search. play, rewind/search, record mode, line in,

Microphone: mono electret condenser

Jacks: video/audio in/ out, DC out for RFU

Tape Speed: SP Video Heads: 2

Cue & Review Search: 9x & 19x forward, 7x and 19x reverse

Fast Forward/Rewind Time: 6-1/4 min./7-1/4 min. for 120-min. tape

Remote Control: IR wireless with zoom rocker and buttons for start/stop, fade start/ stop, counter reset, tape return, onscreen. rewind/search, fast forward/search, stop, play, record, pause

Audio: hi-fi AFM mono

Titles/Graphics: 2 lines of 16 characters plus date/time, age/EVF dis-

Special Features: popup light, still frame, programmed auto exposure, edit erase, insert edit, flying erase head, zero return

Absent Features: stereo audio, LANC jack, mic jack, auto macro, earphone jack, frame advance, slow motion. speed play, auto rewind, indexing, image stabilizer

Horizontal Resolution: 250 lines

S/N Ratios (dB): unweighted video-43.1. weighted video-49.6, chroma AM-41.4, chroma PM-38.3

**Audio Frequency** Response: 40 Hz-7 kHz, +0.02/-3 dB, -11.2 dB at 20 Hz, -8.5 dB at 20 kHz

Hi-Fi Dynamic Range: 63.9 dB

Audio Distortion: 0.3%

RATINGS Picture: good

Audio: average/fair

Ease of Use: very good

Overall: good

the camcorder, and trigger-operated on the remote.

One especially unusual feature is edit erase, which returns the tape to the start of a bad take if it is stopped within the first minute or so. This gives you the option of easy in-camera editing of interruptions like someone walking in front of the camera or car horns and other unwanted bits of picture and sound.

The remote control offers both record and playback functions for convenience. The camcorder has date and time imprinting, and memory for age imprinting. There's no digital superimposer, but there is a character titler with two lines of 16 characters.

In its appearance and control layout, the E520 harkens back to the compact 8mm camcorders of a few years ago. The camera bulge is sprinkled with 12 buttons, many of which are textured so you can identify them by feel—if you can memorize the textures. The unusual buttons include edit erase, age, programmed AE, zoom speed and macro. This is one of the few camcorders we've seen in the last year without auto macro focus.

There's a zoom meter in a window on the side, another feature we haven't

seen in a while. Most two-speed zooms require extra finger pressure to speed up, but this one has a button you have to hold down to access the higher zoom speed. While this prevents accidental speed-ups, it's more complicated. The manual focus ring is a welcome throwback to older camcorders—it's more convenient and accurate than newer push-button systems.

Controls for the transport and character titler run along the top panel. There is no pause control on the camcorder. The remote has no switch to prevent accidental operation, but all the buttons are in a depression that does offer some protection.

Review, edit search and edit erase allow you to do quite a bit of in-camera editing. However, if you plan on post-production editing, it may be wise just to keep the tape rolling and do the cutting later. A degree of spontaneity is usually lost when you're concentrating on getting the tape perfect as you shoot. The A/V outputs can be switched to function as inputs for recording from external A/V sources.

The most significant omissions are an earphone jack, an external mic jack and LANC jack for interfacing with

edit controllers. This camcorder offers more flexibility than a point-and-shoot, but not enough for serious videographers. Ease of use is very good.

Without the light on, the camera requires 6.1 lux to produce a 50 IRE signal, our standard of measurement. However, at 2 lux you can still see about half the steps on a brightness chart. Of course, with the light on, this doesn't matter much. Soon there will be an Electronic Industries Association standard for measuring low-light sensitivity of camcorders. This will make it easier for consumers to compare cameras.

Picture quality is good, about what we expect from an 8mm in this price range. A shot of a color bar chart revealed surprisingly good color rendition, with little noticeable noise (just a touch on the red and orange bars, as you might expect). We think you'll be pleased with the E520's picture. Audio quality is average to fair, a bit below that of many similarly priced models.

We think the E520's pop-up light and fine picture make it a winner and a good value. We rate it good overall. Watch for a similar model this fall, the \$1,400 E700, with optical image stabilization and a 12x zoom.



Tube, projection, square or wide? A guide to high-end big screens

# FIVE GRAND



### BY MARTIN LEVINE

Let's assume for the moment that a crisp \$5,000 bill is burning a hole in your pocket. Maybe your lottery card has five of last week's six numbers, or a great-aunt remembered you in her will. Whatever the cause, be it luck or wealth, you badly need a new television and price is not an obstacle. But choosing the set is. This time it should be something...well, something big, something different, something on the cutting edge.

By fortunate coincidence, TV makers are fielding proup of sets this year that are among the most interesting and diverse ever. Packed with the latest technology, they present dramatically different options in picture size, picture type, even aspect ratio. TV's old limitations are falling, which makes choosing a new set more challenging. The triedand-true way to choose one has always been to consider picture quality, audio performance, then other features, in that order. But for top sets, the issues are different.

We're going to try to make them

TVS

clearer by discussing in detail five televisions that stand out from the crowd. They all have big screens, innovative technologies and princely prices. While prices for most TVs have barely kept up with the cost of living, the high end has risen higher. This group ranges from about \$4,000 to \$6,500, which is why you'll need James Madison's help (he's the president on that fiver in your pocket). Although this is a wide price spread, the TVs represent distinctive choices you can use to examine the features that really interest you. The sets are:

• RCA's PS34190 ProScan CinemaScreen, a widescreen direct-view TV

with a 34-inch screen diagonal.

• Panasonic's PT-58WXF5, a widescreen rear-projection set with a 58-inch diagonal, making it the largest of the first generation of widescreen sets.

• Pioneer's Pro-107 Elite, a rear-projection set with an offbeat, slightly wide aspect ratio.

• Mitsubishi's CS-40601, a conventional direct-view set with a 40-inch screen, making it the largest tube TV available.

• Sony's KP-61XBR28 Videoscope, ugiant 61-inch rear-projection set with a conventional aspect ratio.

They represent the most diverse group of color TVs ever, and choosing one over the others is no easy task. No three of these sets have the same picture size, picture technology or aspect ratio. And there's just no way to judge a direct-view against a rear-projection model purely in terms of picture resolution. There's also the issue of aspect ratio: conventional vs. widescreen vs. Pioneer's "Cinema Wide" format that's about halfway between the other two. If you're on speaking terms with James Madison, you'll want to survey them all.

While HDTV is still at least three years away, the widescreen aspect ratio that's arguably HDTV's most important feature is here now. This year, a handful of manufacturers is introducing the first widescreen TV sets, with features never before seen.

RCA was the first and its Pro-Scan model is a trend-setter. It has a 34-inch screen diagonal (think of it as a stretched 27-inch set) and a price of \$4,999.

While this is a big screen by usual standards, it's the smallest among the models we'll be discussing, which is either a

blessing or a drawback.

Widescreen TV is a natural. Watching a 16:9 image feels like someone has suddenly removed the blinders blocking part of your vision. The world on the screen looks both more realistic and more cinematic. But can you really appreciate the effect on a screen not much larger than the average tabletop? That

partly depends on the rooms in your home. Most manufacturers would agree that the future of widescreen TV lies with projection sets. But not every room has sufficient space for projection sets, and widescreen versions require more space than 4:3 models to maintain comfortable viewing distances.

Letterboxed movies and other widescreen programming, of which there isn't much, look

better on the ProScan set than on conventional sets. The images are larger, because electronic zooming helps fill the entire screen. Panasonic PP-SBWXFa
Type: Rear projection
Screen Size: 58 Inches
Aspect Ratio: Widescree
Price: \$6,499

There's also an esthetic boost from doing away with the horizontal black bands present in letterboxing.

Panasonic's PT-58WXF5 rear-projection TV really takes the image to a cinematic size. This top-line entry is a widescreen model with a 58-inch diagonal and a \$6,499 suggested price. The point of widescreen sets is to better approximate the effect of watching a movie in a theater, and the PT-58WXF5 achieves this to a greater degree. Turn

down the lights, butter the popcorn, slip in a laserdisc and you'll almost believe you paid \$7 to see the show.

Can't decide between a widescreen and a conventional set, especially since true widescreen programming barely exists? Pioneer has a surprising option—a slightly wide screen. Its Pro-107 Elite is a rear-projection set with \$\pi\$ 55-inch screen and an aspect ratio of 16:10.7, about halfway between conventional and full widescreen shapes. The Cinema Wide screen, as Pioneer calls it, represents a huge gamble for the

company since it's completely dropped the conventional 4:3 aspect ratio in favor of its new vision. At \$5,500, the Pro-107 tops Pioneer's new line.

Pioneer chose the odd-sounding ratio of 16:10.7 for good reasons. Pioneer engineers say that at this size, it's easier to maintain edge-to-edge picture sharpness and minimize the distortion present in images zoomed to a wider aspect ratio. Since TV programs still use u 4:3 ratio, people will spend most of their

viewing time watching zoomed images.

On the plus side, the screen is wider than conventional sets, and conventional programs zoomed to fill the screen

are enlarged to a lesser degree than they are on the ProScan and Panasonic widescreen sets. On the minus side, the Pro-107 has to cut off a little image area on both sides of the screen to fill it with movies shot in widescreen formats.

Mitsubishi's CS-40601 and Sony's KP-61XBR28 are both conventional sets with screens large enough to comfortably display letterboxed mov-



# FIVE GRAND

ies. The Mitsubishi is a 40-inch directview set priced at \$3,999, while Sony's is a 61-inch rear-projection model for \$5,299. In fact, Sony's set can display almost the same 16:9 picture as Panasonic's 58-inch widescreen set. And it won't cut off any of the image, even with CinemaScope programs, but oh those

black bars.

In terms of picture size, aspect ratio and my own esthetic preferences, the Panasonic set makes the strongest impression. However, picture quality is another matter. Other factors being equal, direct-view sets display brighter, sharper images than projection sets. Anytime it's necessary to add an optical path (like that created by mirrors and a projection screen) between the picture tube and the viewer, something's going to get lost along the way.

Because it has the smallest screen size among our sets and a direct-view picture tube, the ProScan starts off with an advantage in overall picture once the Federal Communications Commission sets a transmission standard for the U.S.

For a mammoth direct-view set, Mitsubishi's CS-40601 delivers an impressive picture, especially since bigger CRTs tend to lose the sharpness edge of smaller tubes. Mitsubishi's performance

polator that creates a fourth scanning line for every three delivered by the video source, at least in the two expansion modes Panasonic reserved for widescreen programs. The interpolation helps, as does the set's 750 lines of horizontal resolution, but expanded letter-boxed images lose the crispness that pro-

gressive scanning could have preserved.

What Pioneer's slightly narrower aspect ratio gives up in cinematic appeal, it gains back in picture quality. Maintaining picture sharpness and contrast from edge to edge were less daunting tasks for Pioneer engineers, and the results are apparent in the Pro-107's picture performance.

This is also due in large part to a new three-line digital comb filter, a dual dynamic focus system that uses an extra set of magnets on

the CRT, and a new green phosphor that adds up to a bright, high-contrast picture with 830 lines of horizontal resolution. In addition to the innovative aspect ratio, Pioneer has stuffed the set with just about everything it has learned about television electronics and optics.

The same can be said about the largest entry in this group. Sony's 61-incher is based on the same TV chassis developed for its acclaimed XBR<sup>2</sup> direct-view sets. Picture performance

is enhanced by a digital comb filter and the use of first surface mirrors. With these mirrors, the projected image is reflected off the outer surface, rather than

from a reflective base beneath the glass, as is usually the case.

Brightness, sharpness and contrast are astonishingly good for a set this large, and Sony claims its horizontal resolution is 1,100 lines, right up there with HDTV. But there's more to a high-resolution picture than lines of resolution. Despite impressive performance, no one is going to confuse the KP-61XBR28



sharpness, even though its larger competitors are rated for more lines of horizontal resolution than the ProScan's 560. Add progressive scan

line doubling, a digital comb filter and switchable color temperatures for movies and TV programs, and the ProScan adds up to an impressive package. Given high-resolution programming, it could almost duplicate the promised performance of HDTV receivers. Moreover, unlike the other sets, the ProScan has BRGB jack that could (this is only possibility) connect to an HDTV decoder

is due in no small part to an effective comb filter and a high-contrast, darkly tinted picture tube. Mitsubishi rates the set's horizontal resolution at 700 lines, more than adequate for anything short of HDTV programs.

But a screen this big almost demands a line doubler, something that can also be said about our three projection sets. Panasonic comes close with a line interwith an HDTV receiver. Progressive scanning would help, but that's an option that Sony rejects for the present.

Absent this, the set I find most impressive in terms of picture quality is the ProScan.

### HOW'S THE SOUND?

There's another important consideration.

Ploneer Pro-107 Elite Type: Flear projection Screen Size: 55 inch Aspect Ration 16 16 7 Price \$5,500

neighborhood of \$5,000 should deliver audio performance commensurate with its price tag. While all the sets have the requisite amplifiers, multiple loud- | line of direct-view sets, adds a certain

speaker arrays and sound processing circuitry, none is going to outperform even a midlevel home audio system. Anyone who wants true home theater sound is going to connect each of these sets to a separate sound system.

This said, there are significant audio differences among the sets. Both the ProScan and the Panasonic build in Dolby Pro-Logic surround circuitry, a feature that should be a given for any largescreen TV designed for

Sony KP-61XBR28

Type: Rear-projection

Screen Size: 61 inch

Aspect Ratios Come

Price: \$5,299

Any TV that costs somewhere in the home theater viewing. Both Sony and RCA invested in six-speaker arrays, while Panasonic's use of its Dome loudspeaker system, developed for its Gaoo

panache to the overall package.

In informal listening, my ears suggest the Pro-Scan is the sweetest sounding of the bunch, with Panasonic a close second.

Here's the bottom line. If it was my James Madison up for grabs, plus or minus a few Ben Franklins, which of these sets would be sitting in my living room? On the one hand, none, because for this much money, I would want it all: a big screen, progressive scanning, Dolby Pro-Logic surround sound and perhaps some assurance I

could upgrade for HDTV at the appropriate time. Each set has part of the package. None has it all.

But the problem is you could wait forever for the perfect TV set. And that

doesn't make sense. So, which to choose? The ProScan has everything except a really large screen. Pioneer and Panasonic have big, wide screens, while Mitsubishi has a less costly big screen. Sony has the biggest screen and a very good picture. Call me oldfashioned, but for my money, bigger is better. For an extra few hundred, Sony's KP-61XBR28 works as well serving as a home theater as it does serving as a regular TV set. I can always get Pro-Logic in my next A/V receiver and as for HDTV I'll just have to upgrade when the time comes.

At least, I will when I hit the lottery again.





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Our VCRs are equally appressive Multi-television remote control, Frontmounted jacks. Auto head-cleaning system

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# 15 YEARS OF HOME IN EACH

he kids of the '50s were the first TV generation.

The first video generation had to wait for the '80s. Born to video, we came of age as technologies of the tube, tape, lens and disc swept into every corner of America's culture. Video's impacts are so deep, so widespread, they're already taken as givens. VCRs introduced us to a new visual literacy, timeshifting loosened the reins of the present, MTV telescoped our attention span, videogames readied us for computers, camcorders opened our eyes while

narrowing our privacy, amateur news clips held us witness to unforgettable events.

These are the changes we've experienced and that Video Magazine has covered since our premier issue at the start of 1978. As video's impact has widened, so has our perspective. The special anniversary section in the following pages presents a panorama of the events that shaped the home video era, the people who invented it, the enthusiasms that power it and, with the past as prologue, an informed look at the years ahead.





# MONSTOP WALLEY

t began with an idea, but a powerful one—that individuals could gain a measure of control over the television programs be-

ing broadcast into their homes. The VCR did this in ways and with a speed few anticipated. It ushered in the non-stop revolution known as home video, the end of which is still nowhere in sight.

Along the way, Americans lived through slash-and-burn format wars over differences in recording products, legal challenges over the right to make private videotapes, the birth of the camcorder, videogames, the rise of the rental store and much more. What it's added up to is new kind of culture. Here, drawn from the pages of Video Magazine, are the events and trends that shaped today's video-based environment.

Beta vs. VHS. Like top-ranked tennis players in a tense Wimbledon championship, the Beta and VHS formats volleyed back and forth with incremental improvements for almost 10 years before VHS achieved dominance.

Story by Jim Barry, Brent Butterworth, Brian Clark, Kenneth Korman and Stan Pinkwas. Timeline by Stewart Wolpin. How home video grew to become the culture and technology that defined an era

Sony got there first with the LV-1901 Betamax recorder, introduced in March 1976 as part of a large and expensive console that also included a 19-inch Trinitron TV. After modest sales, the company debuted a stand-alone deck

later that year. But JVC countered in 1977 with its first VHS deck, initially available only in Japan. Sony signed up

approved, making
it possible to
broadcast TV
First laserdisc
player, Magnavox's
Model 8000.

Feb. 1978

First portable

Toshiba, Zenith and Sanyo, while JVC brought Sharp, Hitachi and RCA to its camp. But recording time—not brandname muscle or Beta's undeniable technical edge—would soon become the focus of this electronic clash of the titans.

JVC's T-120 VHS tapes doubled Beta's initial recording time of one hour, capturing the public's fancy. Both sides continued to increase recording times, but RCA's marketing and advertising push gave VHS an edge that it would never surrender. Sony hoped the January 1983 introduction of Beta hi-fi would constitute In knockout punch, but VHS hi-fi soon followed. By August 1985, Video Magazine's cover asked, "Is Beta Sinking?" and Beta fanatics gravitated toward laserdisc. Today, Sony keeps two or three Beta VCRs in its line. But for

millions of casual viewers, a "video" means a movie presented on a VHS cassette.

Your right to tape. We take it for granted that we have the right to tape televised programs for personal use. But as

First VCR with stereo sound and Dolby, Akai's 7350

Jan. 1978 First issue of Video Magazine First video rental store franchises— George Atkinson's Video Station—sold.

First programmable VCR, RCA's VCT400

First pay-per-view
programming, movies
on L.A.'s KWHY-TV

Lawyers play Beta copy of The Mickey Mouse Club in U.S. District Court, kicking off landmark Betamax case pitting Sony against Universal over the right to tape

First commercial broadcast of closed-caption show for the hearing-impaired

MTV premier with "Video Killed the Radio Star" by the Buggles

# the video era dawned,

this fundamental activity was so powerfully attacked it took the Supreme Court to establish it as a right, even though most people thought

it already was.

The struggle began in 1976, when Universal City Studios and Walt Disney Productions charged that consumers were illegally taping their copyrighted movies off the TV. Instead of going after viewers, they singled out Sony, maker of Betamax; its ad agencies and a few video dealers. In the ensuing eight years, the Betamax Case, as it came to be known, inched its way toward the Supreme Court. Sony won the first trial in 1979, lost an appeal in 1981, then triumphed at the start of 1984. The court ruled viewers have a right under the Fair Use Doctrine to tape at home as long as they don't use the copies to make money. The decision has stood as a Magna Carta for videophiles ever since.

Rise of the rental store. Video rental stores followed hard on the heels of the first VCRs. By 1978, when Video Magazine appeared, they were already

seldom has any type of retail business been as

beleaguered. Barely 15 years old, video rental stores have always been under siege, weathering attacks by mail-order firms, other kinds of retailers, even their own suppliers. In the early 1980s, Hollywood studios floated their own ill-fated "rental plans."

At their peak, a few years ago, video stores numbered about 30,000 in the U.S. Now, there are about 25,000, and their character is changing. Rental superstores carrying 7,500 or more titles are proliferating, and chains like Blockbuster, which has more than 3,000 outlets, are gobbling up smaller shops. Thousands of supermarkets and convenience stores sell low-priced cassettes, and the possibility of electronic "videoon-demand" directly to homes promises further challenges.

The video rental store has proven to be remarkably hardy and will probably adapt. We've learned in the past 15 years that Americans love to browse in cassette-filled aisles, discussing, compar-

ing, arguing about their favorite films. This can also be done electron-

First him VHS

VCR, IVC's HR

ically, of course, but for a generation, the video store has been the ideal place to find a movie for the night.

Birth of the big screen. Fifteen years ago, a TV set was just an appliance. But audio pioneer Henry Kloss had already sown the seeds of videophilia a year earlier, in 1977, when he introduced the Novabeam video projector, the first practical big-screen TV. (It was actually an improved version of the Advent Videobeam, an unsuccessful design

from 1973.)

Many objected to the Novabeam's dim picture, but Mitsubishi solved the problem in 1983 with its BS-453RS, the first rear-projection TV. Many people still found the picture too dim, but screens were still growing in size. In 1986, Mitsubishi answered the demand with the CS-3501, the first 35-inch direct-view set, and last year upped the ante with the 40-inch CS-40FX1.

The latest trend in big-screen TV began this spring, when Thomson introduced the first 16:9 TV in the U.S., the direct-view ProScan PS34190. IVC and Panasonic have followed suit with rearprojection 16:9 sets, and Pioneer has

countered with a 16:10.7 set.

being franchised. But IVC unveils York's Playboy Club

Jane Fonda's Workout launches

round decoder Model 360 by

Surround Sound

Beta histi is

GE and Kodak

Pioneer's CLD-900

Supreme Court

First TV program broadcast in stereo. Tonight Show

JANE FONDAS DRKOU

Gone With the Burn: A Jane Fonda workout for CED, a disc format launched in 1981, shipped in '82 and withdrawn in '84.

Movie sound at home. The genesis of movie surround sound for use at home was the 1977 release of Star Wars, the first movie in Dolby Stereo, a fourchannel sound process for film. To reproduce the exciting soundtracks of this and other Dolby Stereo movies in the home, Dolby created Dolby Surround, a simplified, three-channel system first heard in 1982 with the Model 360 decoder from Surround Sound Inc.

Shure improved on Dolby Surround in 1986 with the HTS5000 decoder, which had outputs for a center channel and stereo surrounds. Dolby met this

that has since become the industry standard. The first Pro-Logic decoder was NEC's PLD909.

In 1990, Luscasfilm took Pro-Logic further with its THX licensing program, a set of specs for home theater decoders, amplifiers and speakers. At last count, THX-certified equipment was available under more than two dozen brands, and the program has expanded to cover screens, cables and laserdiscs.

From cameras to camcorders. In home video's early days, when people talked about shooting personal videos, they were talking about using a video camera, which had tubes instead of today's CCDs, and a separate "portable" recorder that was

wired to the camera. Generally, the shooter stayed put, since the recorders were heavy. The earliest cameras were black-and-

white, and lacked features today taken for granted, like the zoom lens, the electronic viewfinder and the built-in microphone.

Not until 1983 did we see the first "camcorder" — a camera and recorder in one unit, Sony's BMC-110 BetaMovie. It recorded but could not play back your shot. This pioneering piece weighed in at six pounds. Soon, hifi sound arrived, in both Beta and VHS formats.

Camcorders progressed rapidly, adding the mini-formats of 8mm and VHS- shrink dramatically in both size and weight while becoming much more sensitive to ambient light. The push has continued for better picture quality with new features like multiple CCDs, miniaturized zoom lenses, better autofocus, electronic image stabilization and builtin time code.

Game arcades at home. Anyone older than 25 remembers Odyssey, the first home videogame, which Magnavox introduced in 1972. Odyssey was a simplistic tennis game; later versions offered hockey, handball, basketball and other games. Odyssey and other dedicated game platforms began to fade in 1977 when Atari introduced its 2600 Video Computer System, which used interchangeable game cartridges. The games were fun, but offered poor graphics and sound. To get arcade-quality home



8mm Dawn: Kodak's KodaVision 2400, an early 8mm camcorder.

games, you had to buy a personal computer like the Commodore 64.

Nintendo changed that in 1986 with Super Mario Bros., the first game for the eight-bit Nintendo Entertainment System. Every NES cartridge offered true arcade-quality play, and third-party developers soon created a staggerring variety of NES games.

Sega and NEC later challenged the

challenge with Pro-Logic, a four-chan-C, but it was the arrival of the CCD that prompted the most dramatic changes in NES with 16-bit machines with better nel decoding system camcorders. It allowed camcorders to with mono surround Ma Illah First color LCD TV the Est fast time 118 01-. 198t two inch First Blockbuster Americant spend First 35-inch TV First Dolby Pro-Logic ET-10 Epser more in it year fit. itore opens, in Mitsubishi decoder, NEC | PLD909 rent mexico na video Dallas CS-3501 than (i) see them in iheaters Jan 1986 Nintendo Enter-First TV I madeast in NBC begin First ED Ben debuts with first First 5-VHS Dolby Surround segment distributing all in VCR, JVC VCR Som TV program Super Mario un Halloween episode af y satellite. HR-7000U Brothers game NBC's Amazing Stories



Kids in Court: The Mickey Mouse Club, one of the "illegally" taped shows at issue in the Betamax Case.

graphics. Nintendo countered with the 16-bit Super Nintendo Entertainment System in 1991. NEC introduced the TurboGrafx-CD, the first CD-based videogame system, in 1989, and Sega followed suit in late '92 with the Sega CD.

Direct from space. Satellite technology has been a key delivery medium since the beginning of the video era. Big dishes now bring video programs from space into more than four million backvards. Another 25,000 new systems are hooked up every month, often for customers who cannot receive cable service or who are dissatisfied with cable's poor picture quality and service. Satellites powered the development of cable TV's most popular programs and laid the cornerstones of the broadcast networks' biggest recent successes - news and sports shows. In 1979, the first portable earth stations made it possible for TV stations to broadcast programs anywhere. Now satellites are poised to take center stage, entering a new era of personalized service by delivering video programs directly to tiny home-based dishes that can be mounted in practically any location.

By using higher-powered satellite transponders, digital compression to pack more channels into available bandwidth, and an encryption process to protect signals from unauthorized use, the new generation of direct-broadcast satellite systems promises clearer pictures, CD-quality sound and unmatched program selection at competitive prices.

Roads not taken. Video's brief past offers plenty of reminders that not every great notion is assured public support.

The CED, or Capacitance Electronic Disc, system was introduced by RCA in 1981. It included a \$499 CED player, which used a needle instead of a laser to read information off the discs, and a library of about 200 titles. In the end, CED couldn't keep up with the declining prices of VHS VCRs and tape rentals. RCA abandoned it in 1984, writing off a \$250 million investment. Not all formats even made it to the U.S. In the early '80s, a videodisc format called VHD, for Video High Density, was developed by JVC and marketed in Japan. Despite elaborate U.S. launch plans, that's where it stayed.

The video generation. Deep into video's second decade, its presence is felt in every aspect of our lives. Most homes have VCRs and cable TV. Great numbers have camcorders, videogame systems, satellite receivers and laserdisc players. In the span of one-fifth of an average life, we have been introduced to camcorders, satellite television, simplified timeshifting, 8mm and Hi8,

S-VHS, video printers, exercise tapes, music videos, boxed movie sets, giant TV tubes, high-quality projectors, LCD projectors, surround sound, widescreen TV, interactive games, image stabilization, universal remotes and more.

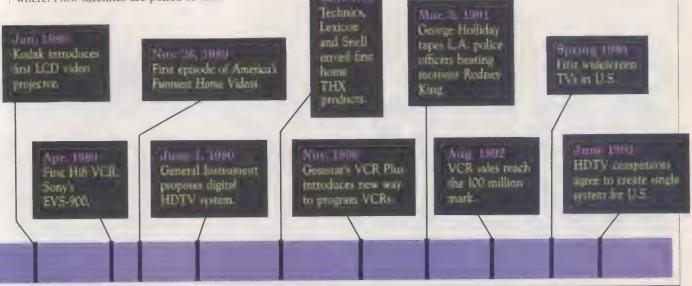
Police use video to document arrests, activists use video to correct abuses, lawyers to re-create events for trial, realtors to sell homes, insurers to judge losses, surgeons to peer inside their patients. Broadcasters expect newshounds to be on the spot when they're not. Networks build programs around amateur footage. Video rental



Sink or Swim: Video Magazine's August 1985 cover questions Beta's future given the popularity of VHS.

stores are as commonplace as pizza shops. Movie buffs collect films as easily as music lovers collect concerts. Families have a powerful new way to watch their children grow.

None of this was true 15 years ago. Today, it's in the fabric of our culture.



# How laserdiscs survived the shadow of the VCR to find a place in the sun

### BY STEWART WOLPIN

Let's face it: We laserdisc fanatics have too much time on our hands. After all, we don't simply watch a film like regular people. We're too busy evaluating the quality of the transfer and the placement of the side breaks. We slow-mo through Terminator 2 just to see Arnold's guide wires. We buy elaborate three-disc sets of John Wayne's restored The Al-

amo. (Okay, I bought it.) And we find the necessary cash and leisure time to partake of the new 13-pound, nine-disc, \$250 THX-approved boxed set of the Star Wars trilogy.

But our fanaticism is not without a solid, dare I say rational foundation. Under the right circumstances, a well-produced laserdisc can deliver a cinematic experience superior to that of multiplex theaters, with their tiny screens and of-

ten outmoded audio systems. And the quality of the laserdisc format in relation to VHS is even better than the oft-cited 60 percent jump in resolution. Flesh tones are warmer and more realistic, colors are bolder and brighter, and old black-and-white films take on new lives.

Meanwhile, laserdisc's audio quality preserves the ambience and pinpoint placement of sounds on even the most detailed and difficult movie sound-tracks, all of which was lost before these shiny 12-inch platters came along. And the extras included with so many laser-disc editions—theatrical trailers, director commentaries, original interactive supplements and the like—supply an altogether new entertainment experience, one that was created just for the laser aficionado. The laserdisc is unquestionably the best and most cost-effective way to collect films.

But it's been a long, hard road to the pristine laserdiscs of the '90s. Most laserphiles will be amazed to hear that the first videodisc player was built in 1927 by British inventor John Logie Baird, in conjunction with his pioneering work on television itself. Baird received several patents for "Phonovision," In phonograph system that yielded 30 lines of resolution. However, World War II put a stop to early videodisc development.

It wasn't until the early 1960s that videodisc research was revived. The newly invented (and very expensive) videotape recording systems of the time

yielded acceptable quality, but did not capture the full NTSC

frequency range. In addition, videotape was not seen as a potential home entertainment format. So in March of 1961, 3M and the Stanford Research Institute (SRI) became partners in the first serious research into videodisc technology, done with the express purpose of developing a home recording and playback system. By the conclusion of the SRI/3M partnership in 1963 and 3M's additional research in 1966, 19 patents had been granted, including one for the constant angular velocity (CAV) format used on subsequent optical disc technologies.

By that time, it was clear that a home video recording and playback system was not only possible, but inevitable. While Sony pursued m videocassette recording system in the mid-'60s, there were four videodisc projects under way. RCA began investigating a capacitance electronic disc system - CED - which used a stylus to electronically read peaks and valleys from grooves in a 12-inch disc. A grooveless capacitance system called VHD – Video High Density – which used 10-inch discs, was being developed by JVC. Telefunken of West Germany partnered with Decca Records to develop a mechanical videodisc system called TED. And in Holland, Philips joined with MCA to develop an optical system using gas lasers.

By the

time Sony pushed the world into the home video age with the Betamax in 1976, followed by RCA's Matsushitamade VHS VCRs a year later, major electronic hardware companies were already choosing up sides in the coming the mid-'70s, the two joined forces with Philips to create DiscoVision, which started shipping 30 to 40 titles in CAV, primarily MCA films. But it wasn't until Pioneer unveiled its first laserdisc player, the VP-1000, in June 1980 that DiscoVi-

product.



Double Duty: Introduced in 1984, Pioneer's CLD-900 was the first combination CD/laserdisc player.

videodisc war. RCA signed up Zenith, Hitachi and Sanyo, along with retailers Radio Shack, Sears and Montgomery Ward. CBS would press the CED discs. JVC hooked Panasonic, Quasar and GE along with J.C. Penney for VHD. Toshiba licensed both. Only tiny Pioneer signed on with Philips and its LaserVision system.

IVC won the first heat. In September 1978, the same year the first issue of Video Magazine hit newsstands, VHD was introduced in Japan. To avoid a Beta/VHS war, JVC's parent company Matsushita tried to rally all manufacturers behind its format, as it had for VHS, but met with little success - VHD was never introduced in the U.S.

Two months later, Philips started selling its Magnavox Model 8000 Laser-Vision player in Atlanta, followed by rollouts in Seattle and, later, Dallas. Both MCA and IBM were developing

disc software for the Philips laser format. In sion collectors had a truly reliable machine on which to play titles like American Graffiti, Psycho and The Sting.

Magnavox, Pioneer and DiscoVision had the market to themselves for less than a year. On March 22, 1981, RCA marketing chief Jack Sauter, high on the rarefied air of his victory over Sony in the VHS/Beta VCR wars, glibly declared campaign ever run for a new RCA

To battle RCA's marketing muscle,

MCA, Pioneer and Magnavox Video Productions formed Optical Programming Associates to create programs that emphasized LaserVision's interactive random-access capabilities. The first truly interactive disc from this joint venture was The First National Kidisc (recently reissued by the Voyager Co.) in 1981. This ground-breaking title, which would later win the first video Grammy, contained just under the maximum 30 minutes of linear CAV programming, but its labyrinthine branches could occupy a child for 50 hours.

Both the CED and LaserVision camps faced one major problem, however: the stunning success of the VCR. "Why buy a machine that only plays movies," consumers rationalized, "when we can buy one that both plays and records?" So they didn't. Plus, consumers were beginning to discover video renting. For a couple of bucks a night, they could see whatever movie they wanted, instead of shelling out \$20 to own it. It was only a small group of techies and film lovers that kept the disc formats



Gone But Not Forgotten: RCA's SGT 100 CED disc player launched a format that was destined to fail.

the new SelectaVision CED Video Disc system, the SGT 100, "the most important new consumer electronic product since color television.'

The launch was supported by the largest advertising and promotional

The first casualty of the marketplace was DiscoVision. It was racked with internecine battles, primarily over IBM's protest against releasing X-rated titles. In the winter of 1981-82, without Big Blue's deep pockets, DiscoVision shut

down. Despite CED's relative success, RCA faced problems more complex than the exploding VCR industry. CED picture quality wasn't much better than

videotape, and because there was physical contact between stylus and disc, the picture was sure to degrade over time. RCA gave up in April 1984, even though it had sold more than a half-million CED machines in two years.

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How 15 daring innovators used pluck, luck and genius to change the way we watch

The culture of video swept through the American landscape on the strength of a vision. Those who most influenced the vision and shaped the way it would spread were a diverse group. Many were scientists, of course, but there were also risk-taking entrepreneurs, marketing wizards and a few true believers who stuck with ideas the conventional wisdom had already dismissed. Here are 15 of video's prime movers, the starting line-up for video's A-team. They changed the way video technology developed, and the way it was accepted. And if the names are unfamiliar, you'll find that in most cases you're already living with the results of their achievements.

**NOBUTOSHI KIHARA** — A Beta Idea. One day in the course of

Format Warriors: Betamax pioneer Nobutoshi Kihara (top) and VHS video chief Shizuo Takano (left).

Sony's lengthy quest for a home VCR, Sony co-founder Masaru Ibuka showed Sony engineer Nobutoshi Kihara a paperback book less than half the size of the revolutionary U-matic videocassette Kihara had recently pioneered. The U-matic format was the first commercially successful video recording system to use a convenient cassette instead of bulky tape reels. Now Ibuka asked Kihara if he could make a home VCR using a tape as small as the book. Kihara's answer was the Betamax. Its introduction in 1975 ushered in the age of home video.

SHIZUO TAKANO — Mr. VHS. Shizuo Takano, JVC's chief of video products in the early '70s, was responsible for developing, producing and marketing the VHS VCR. At a key moment in the format's development, he astutely foresaw that its two-hour recording capacity, which was double Beta's at the time, would win over people who wanted to record movies off the air. The insight led Takano and Yuma Shiraishi. leader of the VHS engineering team, to politely decline a Sony offer late in 1974 to join the Betamax bandwagon then building. The success of VHS, launched in 1976, confirmed Takano's vision: You don't have to be the first off the blocks to win the race.

JACK SAUTER — The Triumph of VHS. Three-quarters of all Makers & Markets:
From the top, Sony cofounder Akio Morita; Andre Blay, who put movies
on tape; Jack Sauter,
who put VHS on the
map; and audio wizard
Ray Dolby.

American homes have a VCR, 99 percent of which are VHS. More than any other single person, Jack Sauter set in motion the selling machinery that would lead to these extraordinary figures. Sauter was vice president of marketing for television giant RCA when Beta and VHS were introduced. In 1977, more than a year after Sony brought its Betamax to the U.S., Sauter struck back. Undercutting Betamax prices, he saturated 50 states with longer-playing VHS VCRs. When VCR sales plummeted early in 1978, Sauter was undaunted. He and his colleagues hit the problem with every trick learned in two decades of selling TVs. Business picked up by the middle of the year. After that, says Sauter, "it was a downhill run."

AKIO MORITA — Make It Small, Make It Simple. Co-founder, with Masaru Ibuka, of Sony, Akio Morita revolutionized video with his ability to predict the kinds of products people would find irresistible. Morita's drive to sell innovative products smaller and more convenient than most people could imagine led to pocket TVs, Beta VCRs, miniature camcorders, 8mm videotape and palm-size TVCRs. "Our plan is to lead the public with new products rather than ask them what kind of products they want," Morita once wrote. "The public does not know what is possible."

ANDRE BLAY - Movies for the Masses. When VCRs arrived, no one knew how much money Hollywood might lose from people taping movies off the air. The studios feared it would be a lot. Andre Blay disagreed. An audio/video equipment distributor from Michigan, Blay bet he could make money by selling prerecorded tapes. In 1977, he cut a deal to sell the first big batch of Hollywood movies on video - 50 films, ranging from The French Connection to The Sound of Music. Blay's success was immediate. Twentieth Century Fox bought him out a year later. Hollywood had learned its lesson, and a vast new business was born.

**GEORGE ATKINSON** — A Nation of Renters. If anyone can be credited with inventing the video rental store, it's George Atkinson. When Andre Blay released his pioneering line of movies, all anyone could do was buy

them. Atkinson, who was already renting Super-8 movies complete with projectors and screens, realized it would be easier to make money by renting videotapes. After all, they were so much more portable. His Video Station rental stores attracted a lot of customers, franchise buyers and imitators. For better or worse, Atkinson also pioneered another staple of video's early years: the video store membership fee.

KEN KAI - Keeper of the Flame. The future looked bleak for laserdisc in the early '80s. IBM and MCA, which had teamed up to sell DiscoVision discs in the U.S., had bailed out of the business. RCA's rival CED system, on its way to extinction, was dragging laserdiscs with it as customers confused the two formats. Ken Kai, head of Pioneer Video, kept the faith. He refused to let laserdiscs die despite a widespread belief that the format held little commercial promise. Kai took over the DiscoVision plant, started the Pioneer Artists label to lure music buffs, introduced a combination laserdisc/CD player and expanded the laserdisc's presence in stores. "I spent \$56 million of Pioneer's money," recalls Kai. "Pioneer let me do any-

thing—everything—I wanted to do."

STUART KARL—Good

Health on Tape. A young man in a hurry, Stuart Karl dropped out of college to found a magazine at age 19. Five publications later, at the helm of the first video store trade journal, Karl decided the culture of video desperately needed programs other than movies. Following his wife's advice, he persuaded Jane Fonda to star in a video spinoff of her exercise book. The staggering success of Jane Fonda's Workout—and its spinoffs—opened the floodgate for exercise tapes and non-fiction videos.

BOB STEIN — Romancing the Laserdisc. A movie on tape is still just a movie, but on laserdisc — well, it's an experience. Laser editions have come to include audio-track commentary, outtakes, production stills, storyboards and other materials that make movie watchers feel like movie scholars. Bob Stein was the first video producer to exploit the technical potential of laserdisc by adding such materials. Starting in 1984 with landmark editions of King Kong and Citizen Kane, Stein changed the laser-





Making a Difference: From the top, laserdisc savior Ken Kai, specialinterest programmer Stuart Karl, Blockbuster's H. Wayne Huizenga and rental store inventor George Atkinson.

disc landscape. Since then, Stein's Voyager Co. has built its Criterion Collection of films into the laser equivalent of the Harvard Classics.

H. WAYNE HUIZENGA — The McDonald's of Video. If you haven't rented a movie from H. Wayne Huizenga, you probably don't watch many. But then, not too long ago, neither did H. Wayne Huizenga, an entrepreneur who'd already made a fortune in the garbage hauling business. In 1987, when Huizenga didn't even own a VCR, all he knew about video was that Texan named David P. Cook owned wideo rental franchise. But his shrewd eve for business saw an opportunity in Cook's spacious, uniform, well-stocked Blockbuster stores. Huizenga bought into Blockbuster and soon replaced Cook as chairman. Then he set about aggressively expanding Blockbuster's 19 outlets into the nation's largest video chain, vast empire of more than 3,100 stores in 10 countries.

RAY DOLBY - Audio as It Ought To Be. If home theater sound has I name, it's Dolby. Ray Dolby seems predestined to have left a mark on home video. After all, at 19 he joined the team at Ampex that developed the first practical videotape recorder. He followed this success with series of innovations that raised the world's sonic standards. Dolby's noise-reduction systems banned hisses from home and professional recordings. In the early '70s, Ioan Allen, vice president of marketing for Dolby Laboratories, perfected Dolby Stereo for theaters, a system that has trickled down to home video enthusiasts as Dolby Surround and Dolby Pro-Logic, sound processes that help movies jump off the home screen and into your head.

TAKASHI KONO — The Incredible Shrinking Camcorder. No one really knew how small you could make a camcorder until 1989, when Sony introduced a tiny 8mm camcorder by dramatically pulling it from behind a VHS videocassette at a packed press conference. The CCD-TR5 proved camcorders could be radically smaller than most believed, and strongly influenced the course of camcorder design. Chief engineer Takashi Kono initiated the project and led a team that included Yuji Morimiya, who designed the TR5,

through a crash program to miniaturize more than 2,000 parts. The goal: a camcorder one-quarter the size of Sony's existing models.

YVES FAROUDJA — Signal Achievements. For the past two decades, no one has labored harder or more successfully to improve the quality of the standard U.S. TV picture than Yves Faroudja, president of Faroudja Laboratories. Through technology licensed to video equipment makers, Faroudja has reduced such video signal problems as dot crawl and chrominance/luminance interference. Every time you use an HQ VCR or a camcorder that's Hi8 or S-VHS, you're putting Faroudja's patents to work.

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Top Techs: NTSC perfectionist Yves Faroudja (below) and HDTV pioneer Woo Hyun Paik (bottom).





# PIONEER'S WIDE RECEIVER

PIONEER'S NEW LINE OF CINEMA-WIDE REAR PROJECTION TELEVISIONS LET YOU SEE MORE OF WHAT YOU'VE BEEN MISSING.

WIDESCREEN TELEVISIONS are poised to make a strong entrance into the home theater market — their theater-like aspect ratio is sure to please home theater lovers trying to achieve the full cinematic effect at home.

Pioneer's new entries into the rear projection widescreen market, including the SD-P5073K, make it easy to accomplish this feat, while letting you see more scenic information than you ever knew was there on video. What sets Pioneer's models apart from other widescreen televisions is their aspect ratio — while all other widescreen TVs are boasting about their expanded 16:9 ratio, Pioneer's units use a 16:10.7 ratio. The 16:10.7 ratio makes the screen less rectangular, providing both more 4:3 information as well as a wider picture on all sources.

This unique aspect ratio is achieved by making the most of the overscanned material, which places the actual edges of the images beyond the visible edges of the screen. All televisions are designed to overscan somewhat — in fact, conventional TVs can overscan as much as 20 percent. A high-quality TV generally overscans at 10 percent, but Pioneer's "cinema-wide" rear projection televisions overscan at a mere 5 percent — making the most of the overscanned material and, thus, creating the 16:10.7 aspect ratio.

The advantages to this aspect ratio become apparent when you use the features that are included on most of the cinemawide models. One of the best examples is the digital zoom feature. Digital zoom gives you the option of watching programs in either a normal or full-cinema mode. The normal mode maintains the normal aspect ratio, while the full-cinema mode expands the vertical picture information to fill the screen. With most 16:9 televisions, expanding a standard 4:3 image looks unnatural, but the Pioneer 16:10.7 models use digital and analog effects to expand an image while maintaining correct geometric shapes at the center of the screen, so the image has no noticeable stretching. Plus, the 16:10.7 ratio already gives you more picture, so the image is stretched less.

When a letterboxed image is expanded, the distracting black bars on the top and bottom of the image are removed. And since not all widescreen movies have the same aspect ratio, the Pioneer models allow them to be changed with the touch of a button, maximizing the image area on the 16:10.7 screen. A 1:78:1 aspect ratio will virtually fill the screen; a 1:85:1 ratio produces slight matting on the top and bottom of the screen; and a 2:35:1 ratio will also produce slight matting.

Now that you are seeing more of what was originally recorded, Pioneer's cinema-wide televisions give you a number of features to further enhance the full picture. Among these features is a super gradation circuit that provides two viewing modes,

Cinema mode 1 and Cinema mode 2, that alter on-screen images depending on their contrast settings. Cinema mode 1 will lower the contrast when viewing very light pictures and Cinema mode 2 will refine picture detail in darker scenes.

Each of the cinema-wide televisions are equipped with a high-contrast black screen that enhances contrast by 20 percent in highly lit rooms and a short focus lens system that decreases the optical path, allowing for improved image quality and a narrower cabinet. Each television also has multiple picture-in-picture functions that let you divide the screen into four or nine segments for quick channel selection or simultaneous entertainment.

Not only do Pioneer's cinema-wide rear projection televisions give you more of an image to look at, they make the images better to look at as well.



Pioneer's widescreen rear projection TVs use a 16:10.7 aspect ratio.

# A videophile's guide to ground-breaking tapes and discs

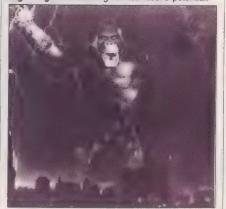
### BY BRUCE EDER

Fifteen years ago, video software was little more than a good idea whose time had not quite come. A few instructional cassettes and adult titles had been released, but the high-quality video entertainment we now take for granted was still a pipe dream. In 1993, our viewing habits are shaped more by our personal tastes and dwindling leisure time than by the format wars and high prices of the early years — virtually anything we want to watch is now readily available, often in enhanced editions few could have imagined at the dawn of the video era.

What follows is our take on 15 milestone releases from the short history of home video—videocassettes and laserdiscs that signaled breakthroughs in content, quality or technology. They raised the art and science of video software to new levels, and their impact can still be felt today.

# (OF VIDEO)

Lightning Strikes: Kong fulfilled laser's potential.



• The Longest Day (Magnetic Video). Darryl F. Zanuck's D-Day epic The Longest Day was the biggest (and probably the best) of the first group of prerecorded movies released on home video. Along with 49 other 20th Century Fox films released by Magnetic Video Corp. in 1977, The Longest Day proved people would pay to see movies on video that they had previously seen for free on television. The notion of watching "what you want, when you want" suddenly seemed an inalienable right. For millions of viewers around the globe, life would never be the same.

• Jaws (MCA). The first of director Steven Spielberg's blockbuster hits, Jaws also heralded the laserdisc format in its earliest incarnation. Philips' LaserVision system was introduced in 1978, but it wasn't until the Jaws disc was released in 1979 that the format left the era of "limited availability" behind. It was a truly daring move for MCA to release Jaws



and other beloved films on the "perfect" home format so early—other studios had to be dragged kicking and screaming into the video era.

• Elephant Parts (Pacific Arts). Michael Nesmith, once known as the "smart" member of the Monkees - the first rock band created expressly for television - spent the '70s writing, producing and recording before emerging in 1981 with the first long-form music video, called Elephant Parts. Piercingly funny and clever, Nesmith's creation consisted of sight gags, sketches and music far more daring than anything the creators of The Monkees ever dreamed of. This program has retained its comedic value more than 10 years after its release - and it's surely the only music video of its time still available, on both cassette and laserdisc, in 1993.

• Rear Window (MCA). Though Rear Window ranks as one of Alfred Hitchcock's greatest achievements, this film – along with Vertigo, The Trouble With Harry, Rope and The Man Who



Animated Sales: One out of every three laserdisc buyers purchased Disney's long-awaited Fantasia.

Knew Too Much—had long been withdrawn from circulation when the '80s began. All had theatrical re-releases in the early '80s and found their way to home video in 1984. But Rear Window makes our pantheon of milestone videos because it turned out to be one of the very last CED videodiscs ever issued.

RCA's videodisc format (see "Against the Odds" for more on CED) was doomed by inferior quality and the



Widescreen Wonder: Released in 1983, Woody Allen's Manhattan was the first letterboxed home video.

wear and tear of its needle-based playback system. Philips' laserdisc format became the standard. *Rear Window* serves as a symbol for the end of the first great videodisc format war, but with five-inch discs on the horizon, can another format war be far behind?

• Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan (Paramount). In the early '80s, movies on videocassette typically carried prices between \$59.95 and \$79.95, and sold few copies beyond those bought by

the 10,000 to 12,000 video rental stores of the time. Paramount Home Video changed all that when it released Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan at \$39.95 for the Christmas selling season of 1982. Its success proved once and for all that many people did want to own their favorite movies. Three years later, Paramount released Beverly Hills Cop at \$29.95, and other companies followed suit with variety of price-cutting trend, home video was transformed into a truly popular – as opposed to elitist - medium.

• Jane Fonda's Workout (Karl Lorimar). Before 1982, the few instructional videos on the market were dry, restrained affairs crossed over from television with lots of talk and very little demonstration. Enter Jane Fonda: In a partnership with entrepreneur Stuart Karl, she created a video companion to her best-selling workout book and transcended all previous examples of the how-to genre.

Jane Fonda's Workout effectively wedded music, exercise and instruction for the first time, all in a package intended



policies. As a result of this trend, home video was transpopularity on home video despite high list prices.

to be purchased, not rented, despite the introductory price of \$60. The tape was fast and entertaining—so much so that

# SHOOK THE WORLD

the image of Fonda leading her exercise class finally eclipsed her earlier guise as a political radical, something that 10 years of good performances and occasional hit movies had failed to do.

• Manhattan (MGM/UA). Until Woody Allen's Manhattan came out on cassette in 1983, all widescreen movies were panned and scanned to fit the relatively square shape of televisions. As the first letterboxed release, Manhattan changed that convention for good. The contract under which the movie was distributed gave Allen control over its video presentation, and he rightfully demanded that cinematographer Gordon Willis' dazzling black-and-white

**Crowd-Pleasers:** Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan broke the video price barrier, while The Prisoner (bottom) proved the viability of series TV on video.





Panavision images be presented intact.

MGM/UA wasn't thrilled with the idea of releasing a cassette with blue bars across the top and bottom of the screen - black wasn't vet the standard - and a disclaimer on the box all but "blamed" Allen for the odd presentation. Ten years later, it's getting tough to sell a laserdisc that doesn't trumpet "Deluxe Widescreen Edition" on the front of the jacket.

• The Road Warrior (Warner). Australian director George Miller's postapocalyptic combat tale made Mel Gibson a star, but as the first Beta hi-fi release in 1982 - along with An Officer and Gentleman - it deserves a special place in the history of video software. Before Beta hifi, sound was the weak link in the video chain. Amid the groaning metal, squealing tires and explosive mayhem of Miller's action classic, it was finally possible to actually feel the home. Even JVC, defeated Beta with its

VHS format by this time, sat up and took notice. A VHS hi-fi system would be announced six months later.

• The Prisoner (MPI). In 1984, the video software industry was far less comfortable with series TV programming than it is today. Stores didn't have enough room to stock huge multivolume sets, and most viewers didn't feel compelled to demand the video release of favorite shows. But MPI Home Video





movie's action in your home. Even JVC, sound, Wings (center) was the first videocassette with hi-fi sound, Wings (center) was the first laserdisc with digital sound, and the 1979 DiscoVision Jaws disc (bottom) put the laser format on the map.

proved the public would jump at the chance to collect complete series on cassette as long as it was the *right* series. The breakthrough program was *The Prisoner*, Patrick McGoohan's cultish late-'60s take on the secret agent genre.

Paramount later took the cue and released all the original *Star Trek* episodes on tape and disc, and is now working its way through *The Next Generation*.

continued on page 82



# JVC RANDOM ASSEMBLE EDITING

JVC'S NEW ADVANCEMENT BRINGS EASY EDITING TO THE AVERAGE VIDEO ENTHUSIAST.







JVC camcorders like the GR-AX75 (left), GR-AX55 (center), and GR-SZ1U use random assemble editing to make better videos.

WITH NEARLY 20 percent of American households owning a camcorder, many amateur videographers have hit the streets and are shooting a magnitude of events and memories in the making. Of course, shooting footage is only half the fun. The other half is, or should be, watching the videos after the occasion.

Unfortunately, many home videos go unwatched or are viewed only once before being shelved for eternity. The answer to this problem lies in editing, but this can be a costly and complex solution — or at least it was in the past.

JVC, the inventor of the VHS format as well as its offsprings — Compact VHS and Super VHS — has added an exciting new feature to its long list of format developments. Many of its Compact VHS and Super VHS camcorders now come with Random Assemble Editing, which lets you use a camcorder and VCR to assemble the scenes in whatever order you determine, eliminating the bad and embarrassing shots with minimum effort. The result is a far more watchable video that you will proudly show again and again. The feature is also exclusively available on the full line of JVC VCRs.

Hook up is simple, requiring only one additional cable than normal camcorder-to-VCR attachment. The extra cable, called a Pause In, attaches directly to the VCR or, if the VCR does not have an available input, directly to the included remote control. JVC Random Assemble Editing is compatible with 17 other brands of VCRs.

To start the editing process, press the On/Off button on the remote. Once done,

you will see an on-screen display of the numbers 1 through 8. These numbers represent the number of edits that can be arranged. Find the location where you want your tape to begin and press the In/Out button. The numbers from the counter appear next to the number 1. Continue forward until you find the point where you would like the scene to end and hit the In/Out button once again. A second set of timer numbers appear next to the first. Repeat this process until all the scenes you want — up to eight — are included. Then hit the VCR Rec Stby button and the Edit button on the camcorder and watch the show.

What you will see on your monitor is the camcorder fast forwarding or rewinding to the first timer number on your edit list. Once there, the camcorder will pre-roll, which means it will go back five more seconds before beginning to

play. This makes sure that the video is up to speed before recording begins at the precise moment you specified earlier. It continues until the timer reaches the out point that was also already specified. With the first edit completed, the camcorder will fast forward or rewind to the next edit point and start the process all over again. It will continue to do this until all edits have been completed. Then you can either assign more edit ins and outs or just enjoy your final production.

Most importantly, Random Assemble Editing does not alter the original master tape, so if you make a mistake or want to redo it, just repeat the steps mentioned above.

By using Random Assemble Editing, you can make sure that the creative process doesn't end when the shooting is over. It helps you make videos that your family and friends will even want to watch.

# REWIND

JVC has been responsible for the introduction and development of the popular VHS format as well as its offsprings — S-VHS and S-VHS-C. Here's a quick look at the major innovations JVC has accomplished with VHS technology over the years.

- 1976 FIRST VHS VCR INTRODUCED
- 1979 FIRST PORTABLE VHS VIDEO SYSTEM INTRODUCED
- 1982 FIRST COMPACT VHS CAMCORDER INTRODUCED
- 1983 FIRST HI-FI VHS VCR INTRODUCED
- 1987 FIRST S-VHS VCR INTRODUCED
  - FIRST S-VHS CAMCORDER INTRODUCED
- 1989 FIRST S-VHS CAMCORDER WITH HI-FI AUDIO INTRODUCED
- 1990 ANNOUNCEMENT OF S-VHS PCM AUDIO FORMAT



# Home-Tech FAROUDJA SYSTEM LD100

Top of the Line: Most videophiles consider the filmlike picture produced by Faroudja's \$15,000 LD-100 line doubler the ultimate in NTSC video.

# 15 exciting products no videophile should have to live without

When Video Magazine began 15 years ago, you couldn't buy a big-screen TV. You couldn't buy hi-fi VCR. You couldn't buy Hi8 camcorder, or a laserdisc player with digital sound. If you wanted a surround-sound system, the best you could do was to pick up an old quad setup at a garage sale.

Thankfully, times have changed. Nowadays, if you want it, you got it (assuming you can afford it). You can buy video projectors that fool you into thinking you're watching film. VCRs and camcorders that beat the ones prosused back in 1978. Surround-sound systems that blow away those you'll find in most movie theaters.

How good are they? In honor of Video Magazine's 15th year, we've rounded up 15 of today's most exciting, essential video products—a mixed bag of person-

al favorites and ground-breaking gear destined to set tomorrow's performance standards. Any of these will make you the envy of fellow videophiles—and maybe even non-videophiles, too.

### **B&W THX SPEAKER SYSTEM**

We love THX systems — as long as they're confined to the Video Magazine home theater testing room. Face it, most THX speakers can make many real living rooms look like Stonehenge. However, the new B&W THX system solves this problem easily. It's an objet d'art worthy of display next to the coolest sculptures. Like other THX systems, it sounds great on movie soundtracks. With three tweeters instead of two, it sounds more airy than most THX systems we've tried. We've heard its music sound is pretty good, too—not surprising, because it

uses the same drivers as B&W's legendary 800-series speakers.

# FAST ELECTRONICS VIDEO MACHINE

Desktop video has always promised an all-in-one solution, a machine that will do everything a video editor needs to do. Many have attempted this, but Fast Electronics may be the first to deliver. The \$3,995 Video Machine, available in IBM PC and Macintosh versions, acts as a six-input video switcher, an eight-channel audio mixer and an edit controller. It works with a wide variety of VCRs and camcorders (including LANC-compatible machines). lust drag the video segments, graphics and titles you need up to the Video Machine's timeline, add the scene transitions and audio cues, and let the machine do the rest.



Sonic Sculptures: B&W's THX speaker system combines THX power handling and performance with stylish designs that complement modern living rooms.

#### FAROUDJA LD-100 LINE DOUBLER

There'll probably never be a perfect video product, but the LD-100 is the closest we've seen. It doubles the apparent vertical resolution of a picture, eliminating the scan lines (and most of the artifacts) that plague NTSC. Hook it up to a good data-grade projector and you'll get a picture that looks so much like film you won't believe it. Faroudja often demonstrates the LD-100 with a small multiscan computer monitor, resulting in the most lifelike video we've ever seen-it looks like 3-D!

lora's silky-smooth operation takes every last vibration out of your camera moves, and its sturdy, pro-style legs keep it steady even in strong winds.

#### SONY CCD-VX3 Hi8 CAMCORDER

This camcorder has grabbed so much attention, you may be tired of hearing about it, especially if you can't afford the hefty \$3,800 price. But it deserves all the acclaim and more - there's simply never been such a great consumer camcorder. Its three-CCD design gives it unprecedented picture quality,

features lets you shoot great pictures in almost any situation. And it has RC time code, the most accurate consumer editing protocol there is. Unfortunately, Sony remains stingy with this feature — if you want a camcorder with RC, better save your pennies, because the VX3 is your only choice.

and its exhaustive collection of manual

#### CELLO 53-INCH REAR-PROJECTION TV

High-end video projectors with line doublers are great until you turn on the lights and the picture washes out. Cello's new 53-inch rear-projection set com-



#### **BILORA TRIPOD**

Most home videographers consider tripods a commodity item - all they have to do is hold up your camcorder, right? But once you've tried a good one like Bilora's Pro 930, you can never go back to those cheap plastic jobs. The Bi-



# HIT PARADE

room, we thought it was the best rearprojection picture we'd ever seen. The \$10,000 price is reasonable when you consider that the least expensive datagrade projector costs \$8,000. AG-1970 bucks that trend by offering every editing feature you need and then some. It's compatible with countless edit controllers and desktop video products. And the picture quality is awesome!

sequences that let you fire up your system or change from two-channel stereo to full-blown home theater at a touch. If you can imagine it, the SmarTouch can probably do it.





Home Theater Hotshots: Counterpoint's Home Cinema high-end electronics line (top) includes a Dolby Pro-Logic decoder, a video switcher and a preamp/controller. Custom Woodwork and Design's Hide-A-Way home theater cabinet (above) houses B&W's THX speaker system and a projection screen.

#### PANASONIC AG-1970 S-VHS VCR

Three years ago, the market was packed with great editing VCRs like Toshiba's SVF-990, Sony's SLV-R5 and JVC's HR-S10000. No more. Most major manufacturers have stripped their S-VHS decks of editing essentials like video dub and jog/shuttle dials. The

## CRESTRON SMARTOUCH UNIVERSAL REMOTE

Behind most automated A/V systems lies a nightmarish tangle of wires. The SmarTouch takes a different, more graceful approach. It's like the ultimate programmable remote—its touch-sensitive LCD panel lets you create your own control layouts. You can program in key

#### **AUTODESK 3D STUDIO**

I could easily spend a week in the basement with this very expensive (about \$3,000) 3-D animation software for IBM PCs. The power of its animation and graphics tools is staggering. It offers an easy-to-use interface, with a new set of highly realistic object textures. You can render 24-bit, high-resolution animations to tape if you have a VCR that records single frames. But let's face it—you don't. So like me, you'll settle for rendering 3D Studio's very attractive eight-bit graphics straight to your hard drive, and (if you have an NTSC video card) recording them on any VCR.

#### COUNTERPOINT HOME CINEMA ELECTRONICS

Most Video Magazine staffers are audiophiles as well as videophiles, so we're always looking for ways to work the high-end audio components we love into home theater setups. Counterpoint, an esteemed manufacturer of high-end electronics and speakers, makes this easy with its Home Cinema line — a Dolby Pro-Logic decoder, an audio preamp/controller and video switcher. They should sound just as good on a Lyle Lovett CD as they will on Jurassic Park.

#### RUNCO SUPER 900 IDTV VIDEO PROJECTOR

Runco threw down the gauntlet two years ago when it introduced its Super IDTV projector, line doubler and aspect-ratio controller: finally, a set laser-disc fanatics could optimize for any framing the director chose. The Super 900, Runco's new top-of-the-line model, has the aspect-ratio controller built in. Where noisy letterbox bars would normally appear, the Super 900 simply shuts off its electron guns, giving the screen a true black bar.

#### PIONEER CLD-97 COMBI PLAYER

We've always had a love/hate relationship with combi players. We love the picture produced by many inexpen-



Desktop Video Valhalla: Fast Electronics' Video Machine performs digital video effects, audio mixing and edit control from a graphic timeline.

sive analog machines, but hate not being able to freeze the picture on CLVs. We love the digital effects on more expensive players, but hate the artifacts that often accompany them. But the CLD-97 seems to do everything perfectly. It offers a pristine picture, every feature you can imagine, and sound that beats many of the audiophile CD players and D/A converters we've tried.

#### CUSTOM WOODWORK AND DESIGN HIDE-A-WAY CABINET

Sure, good A/V gear can turn your living room into a theater. But all too often, that same gear also turns your room into an esthetic nightmare. CWD has the perfect solution in its Hide-A-Way home theater cabinet, which conceals three B&W THX front speakers in a wall unit even the most design-conscious spouse wouldn't object to. A front-projection screen rises from the back.

#### PANASONIC WJ-MX30 VIDEO MIXER

Ever since we acquired Panasonic's WI-AVE5 video mixer, we've used it for

almost every video we've edited. With its wipes, dissolves, digital effects, luminance keyer, audio mixer and back-



Mighty Meter: The Realistic sound pressure level meter is an invaluable aid for audio tweakers.

ground color generator, it's the Swiss Army knife of video editing. The WJ-MX30 goes even further by improving picture quality and adding a much more versatile keying system, gradient and multicolor backgrounds, automated audio mixing, external triggering and a sturdy, smooth T-bar to replace the WJ-AVE5's scratchy slider.

## REALISTIC SOUND PRESSURE LEVEL METER

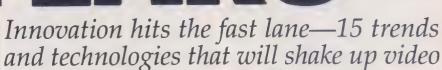
If you're a home theater enthusiast and you don't have one of these, drop by Radio Shack and get one now! For a mere \$31.95, this instrument will help you perform all sorts of useful analyses for tweaking your system. Use it to perfectly balance your Pro-Logic system. Or sort out speaker placement and room acoustics problems by monitoring the swept tones from a test CD. Find out how low that subwoofer really goes. And after you're done testing your system, you'll probably want to measure the decibel level of everything you can think of, like jet engines or your neighbor's outrageous car stereo. Or just see how loud you can yell!











In the last 15 years, most of the inventions that allow ordinary people to record, shoot and edit their own videos were either developed, perfected or rendered affordable. In the next 15 years, these processes will be applied to the distribution of video to homes, businesses and institutions on a scale not seen since the early years of television.

Video technology is exploding in a dozen directions at once, and while we can't predict the next video generation's winners and losers, some key changes are becoming clear. Here are 15 trends and technologies that are going to shake up the world of video as you know it.

• Digital technology. Video handicappers rate the transition from analog to digital technology as the most important video trend of the decade. With the advent of cheaper, stronger computers, the tilt toward digital HDTV and the quickening pace of technology alliances, the

digital locomotive is gaining speed. Digital technology will make itself felt in both new components and products. "Within five years all television will be digital and your TV set will be a computer," predicts Andrew Lippman, assistant director of the MIT Media Lab, a leading incubator of future technologies. Digital TV, in the Media Lab's view, promises better pictures than analog technology and an end to the annoying picture artifacts and interference that plague today's sets. VCRs will also be digital. New digital VCR formats are already being designed to record both NTSC and HDTV signals.

• Data compression. The esoteric art of data compression holds the key to a variety of other promising technologies, including HDTV, high-quality movie CDs, small-dish satellite broadcasts, vast numbers of cable channels and interactive programs. Compression technology uses the language of the computer combinations of ones and zeros - to pack or transmit vastly increased amounts of video and audio information into and through existing video delivery systems. Scientists have already made great strides in learning to squeeze signal information, but the evidence suggests greater breakthroughs await.

 Converging media. The convergence of previously separate communication media is already beginning to trigger changes that could fundamentally shake up American society. New electronic routes into and out of the home will change the ways we use, pay for and relate to entertainment services on a scale not seen since the early days of television. With phone companies exploring video services, defense companies launching TV satellites and cable companies planning phone services, the barriers between traditional industries are shifting and disintegrating. Apple



Expanding Landscape: Left to right: Zenith engineers perfect flat-faced monitor, video window adds immediacy to CD-based Earth Command game, the ever more critical microchip, prototype of Sharp's handheld "digital assistant." spool of fiber-optic communications cable and MIT's Media Lab.

Computer Chairman John Sculley refers to this process as "an isoquantic shift," comparable in impact to the invention of the telephone or the steam engine.

• The information highway. Combining fiber-optic and coaxial cable technologies, this futuristic plan is already moving from corporate drawing boards into the real world. The goal is system that seamlessly merges entertainment TV, computer and business transmissions into the same digital broadband network that handles long-distance phone calls, news delivery and home security services. Experts predict the information highway will generate more than \$3 trillion in annual revenue by 2001.

• Digital audio. As video moves into the digital domain, so will soundtracks. More than a decade after the birth of the CD, few American TV viewers have experienced true digital audio soundtracks with their video images. Much TV sound is still dismal. New digital sound technologies will dramatically enhance music programming for television. One example is Dolby's AC-3 system, a digital version of Dolby Stereo with stereo surround channels.

• Small-dish satellite TV. We won't

have to wait 15 years for direct-broadcast satellites. DirecTv, a subsidiary of Hughes Communications, will launch the first of two high-power birds this December and begin broadcasting next spring. The new video service, the largest network launch in history, will offer serious competition to the cable industry. Any home in the continental U.S. will be able to receive DirecTv's 150 channels of entertainment programs, movies, sporting events and special-interest shows. An 18-inch satellite antenna and decoder, for about \$700, will put

a viewer in business.

• Thin-wire TV. The phone industry is discovering that its existing twistedpair wire system, which descends in a straight technological line from the days of Alexander Graham Bell, can be coaxed to transmit video programs. The process of sending video signals over standard copper wire is known as thinwire TV.

Thin-wire TV is the first step for ambitious phone companies seeking to free themselves from the shackles of government regulation. These companies want to build their own digital information highways. The Bell Atlantic Corp.,

based in Philadelphia, has taken an early lead among phone companies by forming Bell Atlantic Video Services, which is dedicated to constructing interactive networks that combine video, information and telephone services. The Chicago-based Ameritech company is also planning an ambitious expansion along these lines.

• Interactive cable TV. The cable industry plans to take the lead in creating two-way, interactive video services. Tele-Communications Inc., the nation's largest cable operator, has announced a \$2 billion program to lay fiber-optic cable in more than 400 communities around the country by 1996. TCI also says it will spend \$200 million to launch up to 60 new digital TV services, many interactive, to a million homes in the next two years, using digital compression technology created by General Instrument and AT&T.

Not to be outdone, Time Warner, the world's largest media and entertainment company, plans to build a fully interactive, two-way cable network for 4,000 subscribers in Orlando, Florida, by early next year. The system promises an unlimited menu of programs and inter-





# SHARPER IMAGE FROM SHARP

## SHARP'S VIEWCAMS BRING THE BIG SCREEN TO THE BACK OF A CAMCORDER.

ALL CAMCORDER users are aware of the fatigue and discomfort involved with squinting through a 1-inch eyepiece — not to mention the annoyance of missing everything that occurs outside the 1-inch world. Apparently the designers at Sharp are camcorder users themselves because they have recognized this common problem and have found a solution — the ViewCam camcorder line.

Each model in the ViewCam series has features you expect from higher-end models, but what really sets the View-Cams apart is an innovative 4-inch color LCD on the back of the unit that acts as a super-sized viewfinder. No more squinting and no more missing the action. Simply hold the camcorder a comfortable distance from your body and shoot.

The anti-glare color LCD features onscreen displays and allows the user to see everything they've shot quickly and clearly in full color. The ViewCam can also accept external sources, so it can act as a monitor for prerecorded 8mm tapes or it even can be attached to a VHS camcorder or VCR.

Camera work is simple. The View-Cam lens and viewscreen rotate 270 degrees and the LCD image inverts automatically when the lens is flipped upside down, allowing ViewCam users to see themselves right-side up.

Among the many features offered on all three ViewCam models are "Digital Still Snap Shot," which freezes the frame for five seconds, and an 8x power zoom. For better images, the ViewCams include neuro auto exposure, digital auto white balance, full-range auto focus, flying erase head, and a high-speed electronic shutter.

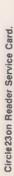
The three ViewCam models include the VL-HL100U, the VL-E40U, and the VL-E30U. The top-of-the-line VL-HL100U is a Hi8 unit that includes HiFi stereo recording and electronic image stabilization. The VL-E40U is an 8mm version of the VL-HL100U, and, although it does not have the Hi-Fi stereo recording capabilities, it adds 16:9 widescreen recording to the feature mix. The VL-HL30U is also an 8mm model with 16:9 recording capabilities, but this model features a slightly smaller 3-inch LCD viewfinder..

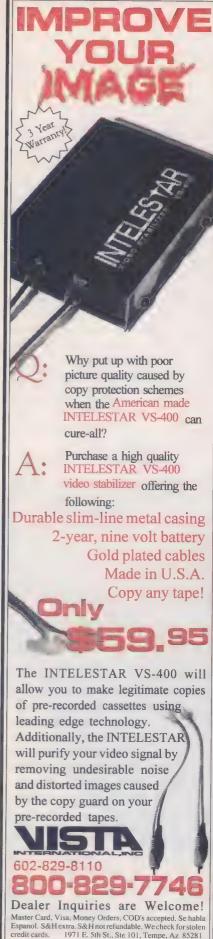
With their ViewCam line of camcorders, Sharp has revolutionized the look and capability of the camcorder. They have broken with the traditional size and shape and have addressed the real working needs of today's videographer. Most importantly, they have now built an entire line of ViewCams that fits any budget and shooting style.

You'll be seeing a lot of them being used this Christmas season — and you'll finally be able to see the faces of those who are using them.



With their ViewCam line of camcorders, Sharp has revolutionized the look and capability of the camcorder.





active services that can be accessed on demand. If it works, the system will soon be made available elsewhere.

• Two-way services. Expect interactivity to transform video from a passive to an active pursuit, at least for those who want it. The screen will communicate with you, and you'll be able to communicate with the screen. How? Almost any way you can think of. New video delivery systems will be counting on consumers to accept such two-way services as movies-on-demand, on-line videogames (with the capability to play the same game in several homes at the same time), home shopping and banking options, and access to educational databases, including on-line medical libraries and encyclopedias. You'll be able to make video phone calls conveniently and send camcorder clips across phone wires to friends, a process known as videofaxing.

• HDTV. It's on the way, but still elusive. The major proponents have drawn together in a "grand alliance" to collaborate on a single advanced American broadcast transmission standard. If all goes as planned, high-definition broadcasting could begin in 1995. But don't count on it. Many broadcasters

treat the onset of HDTV with the enthusiasm most of us reserve for root canal treatments. The costs of converting to HDTV will be large, the markets uncertain and the options varied. For example, some broadcasters want to use a new TV channel intended for HDTV to transmit multiple NTSC channels and data services instead. Despite the obstacles, HDTV should become available in a few years. When and how much it will cost is still anyone's guess.

• Movie CDs. The race is on to turn the popular five-inch CD into a highquality storage medium for movies. Paramount will release the first such films later this fall for the CD-I system using an MPEG-1 compression standard. But more sophisticated compression standard, MPEG-2, is close to completion, and laserdisc-like CDs could be at hand by mid-decade. Once the quality problem is licked, movie CDs stand a good chance of replacing the venerable VHS cassette as a primary movie medium. They're lighter, smaller, more durable and far cheaper to duplicate. There's even a possibility video CDs will have home recording capability as well.

• Desktop video. Expect to see complete high-quality video production and postproduction systems become household appliances over the next 15 years. Home computers will offer professional desktop video editing effects as standard features, while consumer camcorders will rival the performance of today's top

professional models.

· Personalized news. Newspapers, too, are experimenting with electronic delivery and video applications. A group of 17 publishers, including the Gannett, Knight-Ridder and Times Mirror companies, is exploring new ways to use telecommunication systems to get you the news. One project is looking at ways to tailor electronic newspapers to every individual reader's interests. A project at Knight-Ridder is building Hi8 video clips into the newspaper's structure so that a reader scanning a paper, downloaded via cable to the flat screen of his personal digital assistant (a type of handheld computer due later this year), could read a story while watching it illustrated by a video clip.

• Solid-state recording. As the next century gets under way, solid-state recording media may begin to supplant magnetic tape as a means of recording video. This could mean we'll see VCRs and camcorders that use large chips to store recorded information, just as some answering machines already store messages, although in a more limited manner. For now, engineers say, solid-state memory chews up too much power for video applications, but a breakthrough in low-energy memory storage is looking



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very possible in the next few years.

• Image understanding. What happens when digital video technology is the present, not the future? Researchers at the MIT Media Lab are exploring a "postdigital" video project they call image understanding. In this futuristic application, an intelligent TV receiver tailors a viewer's program lineup to what the system knows about its subscriber's habits and tastes. This powerful video companion will be able to do everything from construct personalized electronic newspapers to edit the level of violence in action films. "Say I send the word 'animal' to your TV set," explains the Media Lab's Lippman. "In your house this instruction might put a cat on the screen. In my house it might display a dog. The TV will know a little bit about the person who's watching it.'

continued from page 66

WOO HYUN PAIK — Dial 'D' for Digital. On June 1, 1990, General Instrument dropped a video bombshell. Based on the work of a research team

led by Woo Hyun Paik, the company proposed using a digital signal to transmit high-definition TV shows for television's next generation of programs and monitors. Although Zenith had earlier proposed a partly digital signal, no company had been bold enough to fully jettison analog NTSC in the quest for HDTV. Paik's work broke the ice. Other digital proposals followed, leading to this year's alliance by a group of HDTV suitors to perfect a digital system the Federal Communications Commission is expected to approve for nationwide use.

GEORGE HOLLIDAY — And Video for All. People used to worry about Big Brother watching their every activity, but George Holliday, the man who taped Los Angeles police officers beating motorist Rodney King, proved that anyone with a camcorder can turn the tables. Holliday's brutal footage precipitated the 1992 trial of the four officers whose acquittals, in turn, sparked rioting in L.A. His action in taping King's arrest is an unforgettable example of the power personal video can give to anyone to influence events. Holliday, who had owned his Sony camcorder two weeks, will be America's most famous videographer for some time to come.

The 1993 laserdisc boxed sets of the Twin Peaks and Fawlty Towers series show that interest in series television on video has vet to subside.

• King Kong (Criterion). The laserdisc format didn't fully mature until the Voyager Co. released King Kong, in 1984. Laserdisc techies working behind the scenes had long understood the format's potential for multiple audio tracks and true interactivity, but Kong was the first title to fulfill that promise.

In his running commentary, the late film scholar Ronald Haver addressed the viewer directly, pointing out specific elements of various shots and scenes, while an original supplement mixed text, still images and motion footage into something altogether new. The result was a fundamental change in the way movies were presented on home video, with all kinds of extras beyond the movies. This release also anticipated the era of fiveinch multimedia discs, which is just beginning to take shape a decade later.

• David Bowie-Serious Moonlight (Media). Concert videos had been released before 1984, but none had been produced expressly for home video until David Bowie's Serious Moonlight. This ground-breaking release also demonstrated just how far the genre had to go: Its visuals were crude and grainy and the sound left much to be desired. Even so, it opened up the entire video music field to subsequent concert creations by artists as diverse as Prince, Neil Young and Michael Jackson. By the late '80s, video had become the third audio format, after CD and cassette.

• Gone With the Wind (MGM/ UA). Released on cassette in 1985, Gone With the Wind established a number of video "firsts." It was the first feature film to get a special, boxed-set release on videocassette, the first to carry a list price as high as \$89.95, and it went on to become the first film on video to receive regular upgrades in mastering

quality and packaging.

Most important, however, Gone With the Wind is a testament to the value people place on precious video titles. Though its tape price has never dropped - and the laserdisc has been issued three times at prices up to \$150 — it has never stopped selling at a fast clip. Several Disney titles can stake similar claims, but Disney accomplishes this feat by limiting availability of top titles, rather than keeping them in release.

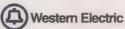
• Wings (Paramount). Only on home video could a classic silent film become the vehicle for a technological

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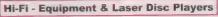
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breakthrough in sound. The first Best Picture Oscar-winner back in 1927-28, Wings creaks mercilessly by current standards. But in 1985, Paramount made it the first consumer laserdisc in the U.S. to boast a digital audio track. The soundtrack itself was something of cheat - Wings had received a new score for home video, recorded in 1984. But with the unprecedented sharpness and clarity of its sound, Wings marked the dawn of home video's digital era.

• Fantasia (Walt Disney). Fantasia was hardly a box-office success when it first hit theaters in 1940 - the public wasn't prepared for the intensity of its sounds and images, or sufficiently comfortable with its classical music score. Fifty-one years later, Fantasia broke every sales record there was for home video: 12 million pieces sold on videocassette and an amazing 250,000 laserdiscs - one disc for every three players.

Fantasia worked its way into America's households, launching video collections where none had existed before. It also established the notion of the video release as a work-in-progress, thanks to Disney's announcement that the company would update the film in subsequent releases, adding new sections and deleting others.

• Beauty and the Beast (Walt Disney). Fantasia set the stage for the even greater success of Beauty and the Beast in 1992. In ■ recent civil suit Disney brought against GoodTimes Home Video, it was revealed that Beauty sold a mind-boggling 25 million copies, a number many had believed out of reach for any single home video release.

The demand for anything relating to this title was so great, Jean Cocteau's 1946 Beauty and the Beast feature suddenly sold an additional 15,000 copies on video last year in Disney's wake. With Disney's Aladdin - 1992's most successful theatrical release - set for video on October 1, and Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs likely to appear on video for the first time in '94, Beauty's extraordinary sales record may not last long. Disney's hold on the viewing public only seems to grow stronger with time.

continued from page 63

But Pioneer and Philips persevered, primarily on the strength of LaserVi-

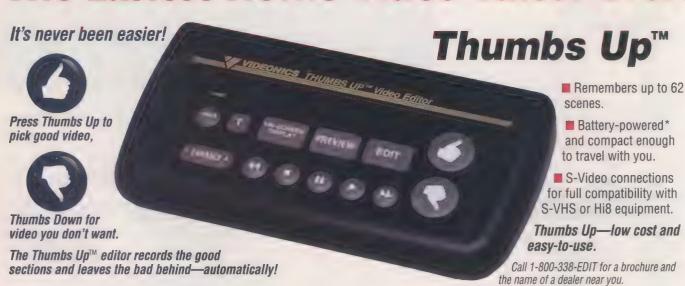
sion's success in Japan. The players themselves had become more reliable with the advent of a solid-state laser pickup. But there was still no compelling reason for most Americans to choose laserdisc over a VCR - until the rise of the compact disc. In September 1984, Pioneer introduced the CLD-900, a machine that could play both movies and

By 1985, laserdiscs with digital sound began to appear, together with 35-inch monitors, larger rear-projection TVs, hi-fi VCRs and a home version of movie theater audio called Dolby Surround sound. Consumers could now build a miniature movie theater in their homes, and they hungered for top-quali-

ty programming material.

At the same time, movie studios, once openly hostile to the home video revolution, began to hire film aficionados to run their nascent and highly profitable home video divisions. These enthusiasts immediately recognized the advantages of laserdiscs. In 1984, the first enthusiast laser-only company, Voyager, released collector's editions of King Kong and Citizen Kane in its new Criterion Collection series. Both discs included supplementary material and extra

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Another difference between videotape and laserdisc became evident when a concern for artistic integrity led Woody Allen to demand that the video version of Manhattan be released letterboxed, preserving the film's widescreen theater look. Voyager decided to test consumer acceptance of letterboxing by releasing Max Ophuls' Lola Montes in its full innovative widescreen format, but only in Japan. In 1987 and '88, several other letterboxed discs were released in Japan, including such seminal widescreen presentations as 2001: A Space Odyssey. U.S. video stores began to show an interest in importing these letterboxed discs for their more demanding

In December 1988, MGM released Dr. Zhivago and Ben Hur, the first American films released by an American studio in the letterbox format. In March 1989, FoxVideo released widescreenonly laserdisc edition of Die Hard. The success of these three titles, plus the jump in picture quality with the advent of digital transfers, sent shock waves through the home video industry. Studios realized there was a market of conspicuously consuming "laser maniacs,"

as Danny DeVito calls us, who love film and the details of its production. Directors like DeVito, Martin Scorsese, Stanley Kubrick, Steven Spielberg, James Cameron and George Lucas played active roles in seeing their works preserved and enhanced for posterity.

The laserdisc phenomenon is still relatively young; only about 1 percent of U.S. households own a laserdisc player, and most live in New York, Los Angeles or San Francisco. Few video retailers stock laserdiscs; fewer rent them. But there is enormous mail-order activity in new and used discs, a trend that often presages a strong retail business. And laserdisc players are the fastest growing product category in the consumer electronics industry.

The future? Well, there's HDTV, recordable disc technology, digital compression that could shrink the size of the videodisc, and who knows what else. But until speculation becomes actual product, laserdisc will be the format of choice for film buffs and techno-perfectionists for many years to come. But the only future I'm concerned about is the forthcoming CAV Criterion edition of Robocop, complete with director Paul Verhoeven's running commentary and

supplementary material about the creation of the movie's special effects.

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When you shoot with a camcorder, it's easy to bump into things as you back up to get more people in a shot. I solved this problem by attaching a small mirror to my eyepiece with Velcro. I use my right eye to monitor the viewfinder and my left eye to look forward and to check the mirror when I'm walking backward.

How you mount the mirror depends on your camcorder. You may find that spring clamps, nuts and bolts or other types of hardware do the job best. The goal is to make it easy to attach and remove the mirror without damaging the camcorder body. An excellent mirror source is the toy store—the tiny mirrors kids play with work perfectly.

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continued from page 29

ample, now offers only three camcorders that use the small 26.7mm head drum. Within a few more model changes, Sony will probably not use it at all. Meanwhile, Panasonic has found a way to use a standard-diameter double-azimuth head drum in its latest IQ-series camcorders, readily admitting in its promotional literature that doing so enables the camcorders to achieve greater compatibility with table-model VHS decks.

Despite this, even two different makes or models of VHS decks sharing the same size drum can exhibit wavy vertical lines. This is an anomaly that can readily be tested and seen by anyone who cares to take the time to look closely at how vertical lines are reproduced onscreen.

For this reason, it's best to play your tapes on the VCR that recorded them if you demand optimum picture quality. Likewise, serious home videographers may want to play their camcorder tapes in the camcorder, even if they have a VCR of the same format. Of course, this

wears out the camcorder faster.

My uncle from the U.K. brought along his 8mm camcorder during a recent trip, and I was surprised to discover it has two recording speeds, SP and LP, instead of just one like ours do over here. Why don't 8mm camcorders sold in the U.S. have two speeds?

Victor Smythe Boston, Massachusetts

At least one 8mm camcorder in the U.S. did offer two recording speeds - the modular system sold by Kodak between 1985 and 1987. While many 8mm and Hi8 VCRs and Video Watchmans offer both speeds, all camcorders only record in SP, even though a few brands (including Sony and Canon) offer the ability to play the LP speed,

even if they can't record it.

Two-speed record/playback for European PAL camcorders has always been the rule, however, primarily because PAL camcorders adopted a faster linear tape speed and wider video track pitch than NTSC models. PAL 8mm SP speed is 2 centimeters per second (1 cm for LP), while it's 1.43 cm/sec. for NTSC and half that for LP. Since thinner, longer 8mm tapes weren't available when the format appeared, the PAL LP speed was deemed necessary for extended taping sessions.

I recently had some silent home movies transferred to videotape. The lab dubbed in ■ background soundtrack I selected. Unfortunately, when I play the tape on my VCR, I can't hear the audio, even though it can be heard when the tape is played on my neighbor's VCR. What gives? Is there a problem with my VCR?

> Bill Katz Westerly, Rhode Island

Knowing the makes and model numbers of the VCRs involved would help in my diagnosis, but I think I can identify the gist of the problem. When the lab dubbed the audio onto the tape, it was probably as a second pass after it had transferred the movies to video. This means the lab dubbed the audio onto the linear audio track. Hi-fi audio can't be overdubbed after the video has been recorded, although the lab could have recorded both hi-fi audio and video at the same time. Assuming the lab was assembling several little reels of movies into a single tape, I can see why the lab chose not to go that route, since it would have complicated the job and increased the cost.

Your tape must have had a linear au-

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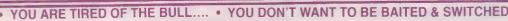
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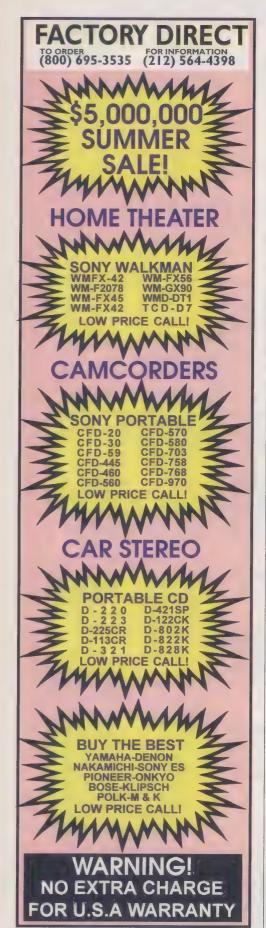
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dio track. However, the lab probably used a hi-fi VCR for the tape transfer, in which case a "blank" signal was recorded on the hi-fi tracks, since it's not possible to turn off the hi-fi recording on any consumer machine I'm aware of. (It is possible on several pro VHS machines.)

If you have a hi-fi VCR, any time you play that tape, the audio circuit automatically tries to play the hi-fi sound, even though there's no sound there. To hear the sound recorded on the linear audio track, you have to manually select it using the audio monitor control on your VCR.

As for why your neighbor's VCR can play the sound immediately, it's likely he doesn't have a hi-fi VCR, so the only sound the machine can play back is the linear audio track.

Sony's CCD-VX3 three-chip Hi8 camcorder interests me greatly, since all the reviews have been very good. But how does it compare to a professional Hi8 camcorder like Sony's EVV-300 or Toshiba's TSC-200?

J.B. Barnette Los Angeles, California

While the VX3 is superb camcorder, it is intended for the highend consumer, not the video professional, even though pros may find it suitable for their purposes.

Pro camcorders like the EVV-300 and the TSC-200 cost more than twice as much as the VX3, even though they are also Hi8 models. How do they differ? Pick one up at an industrial video dealer - the machines' obvious sturdiness and heft tells the tale. Both pro models use heavy-duty metal castings, instead of the plastic found in consumer models. Both offer balanced, shoulder-mount styles for sturdier handheld shooting. They also offer an extensive range of audio and video adjustments not found on the VX3, like aperture correction and integral color-bar and black generators, as well as mechanical toggle switches to turn features on and off. By contrast, consumer camcorders rely on "software" switches buried in onscreen menus and prompts that are more time-consuming

And speaking of time, the pro models both use long-lasting, industry-standard NP-BI 12-volt, 2.4-amp batteries to maximize recording time. Both pro models also conform to the C-mount interchangeable lens system, giving the user a vast array of optical choices for specialized tasks. Finally, not all three-chip camcorders are alike, and while the VX3 uses 1/3-inch CCDs, the EVV-300 and TSC-200 use half-inch CCD chips that are less prone to smear.

Despite these and other features, the bottom line may still be picture quality, and even the most expensive pro Hi8 camcorder can't squeeze more picture quality from the format than it's capable of, or reduce or eliminate Hi8's propensity for dropouts. Given the much higher price of the pro Hi8 camcorders, and despite their extra features, I suggest you look at some of the newer low-priced Betacam or M-II camcorders. Both formats provide much better video quality and versatility than Hi8. Hi8 may have aspirations to being a pro format, but in my humble opinion, it doesn't quite make the grade.

I want to buy an audio/video editor or some other device that will allow me to control the pitch of the sound coming from my VCRs. I want to be able to raise the pitch to sound like Alvin and the Chipmunks, and to lower it as well. Who makes such a device, and what does it cost?

James J. Carter Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Many pro videotape formats can be speeded up or slowed down incrementally, with or without appropriate adjustments to the accompanying soundtrack. Time compression like this is commonplace on TV networks (Nickelodeon uses it, for example) and most viewers aren't even aware it's going on, although a sharp eye can spot the jerkiness in actors' movements when they walk across the screen.

There really aren't any consumer video products that can do the same thing, although over the years a number of VCRs have offered double-speed playback with audio. On some models, the pitch of the sound is also doubled, producing a Donald Duck effect, while on some hi-fi VCRs, the audio remains intelligible, albeit fast and semi-garbled. Double-speed playback is really too fast for this technique, but without special dynamic tracking video heads, slower speeds that might come closer to the effect you want aren't possible.

By the way, the Chipmunks effect only works because the actors speak slower than normal to adjust for the audio compression added later. The animation, of course, is adjusted for the soundtrack, producing the unique sound that the anthropomorphic rodents popularized way back in the mid-'50s.

In your June "Q & A" regarding the connection of a camera to a Video Walkman, you failed to mention the Sony CCD-G1 camera. Contrary to

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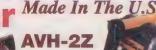
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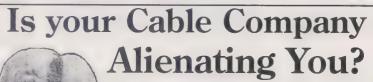
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> Steve Channon San Jose, California

Reader David Ashcroft was looking for a very small pencil-sized camera, comparable to what he saw in the movie Patriot Games. The Sony CCD-G1 camera (which is no longer made, although a few may still be in stores) doesn't qualify, even if the detachable optical viewfinder is removed. It does come with exactly the right cable to fit a GV-500 Video Walkman, but miniature cameras from other manufacturers would require special wiring to make them work.

I've recently taken an interest in making home videos, but am confused by many of the terms and abbreviations. Is there a glossary you can direct me to?

> Albert Lange Montague, California

Almost any large bookstore carries dozens of books on home video, most of which have glossaries in the back. The public library has even more to peruse, for a lot less money.

The Consumer Electronics Group of the Electronic Industries Association publishes a pretty good glossary of terms that also covers other electronic areas, such as computers. You can purchase a copy directly from the EIA. Write to 2001 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W., Washington, DC 20006-1813, or phone 202-457-8700, or fax 202-457-4901.

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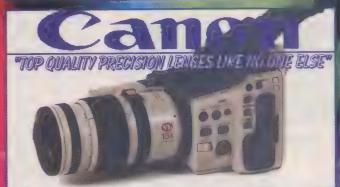
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What are sound dub and sound-onsound? My Nikon VN750 Hi8 camcorder doesn't have this feature and I've been told it isn't available on 8mm gear. But I have seen it offered on VHS camcorders.

> Albert Lange Montague, California

Sound dub, better known as audio insert or audio dub, adds new audio to a tape without affecting the video. Sound-on-sound is a term you usually hear in pro audio circles. It refers to the multitrack recording process used to make albums - each instrument is recorded on a separate track, and parts are gradually added.

Because the 8mm format records the audio and video signals together, it's not possible to dub in new sound without recording over the existing video. The exception to this rule is the digital PCM stereo that can be dubbed (since it's recorded on a separate part of the videotape), provided you buy the right VCR. Sony's EV-S3000 Hi8 VCR offers this feature, but it is seldom found on camcorders.

VHS VCRs and camcorders that offer audio dub do so because the new audio goes onto a separate part of the tape - a 1mm strip along the top edge. Since audio fidelity relies on the forward speed of the tape (maximum 3.335 cm/ sec. at SP), the quality isn't as good as the hi-fi soundtrack, which is recorded using the rotating video heads but can't be dubbed.

If you don't want to buy a Hi8 VCR, an alternative is to dub or edit the original tapes to S-VHS, carrying over the original audio to a new VHS hi-fi soundtrack, which also gives you the ability to add a supplemental soundtrack to the linear audio track, or even replace the hi-fi audio when the copy is being made. An S-VHS editing VCR can even do a crude version of sound-on-sound-just record the original sound on the hi-fi tracks, dub in the new sound on the linear audio track, and set the VCR's audio monitor switch to mix.

I'm very concerned about the stability of videotapes that I buy with antitheft devices attached, as well as kitchen magnets which I sometimes pass close to a prerecorded cassette. Is there any possibility these could erase or damage the tapes?

M. Shulman Brooklyn, New York

Not to worry. The devices used to thwart theft of videocassettes and other products won't harm the tapes in

any way. As for kitchen magnets, even placing one an inch or less from the surface of the tape won't significantly disturb the signal. I know because I've tested this. But other magnets have different degaussing properties. Alnico magnets (often found inside speakers) are much more powerful than the flexible ceramic magnets often used for refrigerator door doodads.

However, if you touch a ceramic magnet to the surface of the videotape (something you're not likely to do accidentally) and draw the tape across its surface, it will be erased. This technique is so effective it's used in a number of combination tape rewinder/erasers, which position a highly polished permanent magnet against the surface of the tape during the winding mode, effectively removing all vestiges of any recording, including audio, video and control tracks.

I have two JVC HR-S6700 S-VHS VCRs. When I do insert edits in standard VHS, the beginning of the insert is very smooth but the end point sometimes has a slight jitter. S-VHS is always smooth at both the beginning and end of the edit. Why is there a difference between these two formats, or is there a problem with one of these decks?

Demetrius S. Butler Dale City, Virginia

Since I own a JVC HR-S6700, I immediately tested it to see if what you describe occurs with my machine. It didn't. Whether in S-VHS or VHS, both the beginning and ending of the edit points were smooth and without jumps or distortion. However, all my tests, including the edits, were made on the same machine. In such a case, the width of the heads and tracks recorded on tape are optimized to work well with the width of the single flying erase head found in this deck.

When I inserted a camcorder tape made in SP, where I knew the width of the heads (and therefore the tracks) was narrower than those made by the 6700, I did detect a bit of roughness at the end of the edit. This test was made in standard VHS, since that was the format of the tape I edited. So if your original tape came from a source other than one of your 6700s, the possibility of a trackwidth mismatch may be contributing to your problem.

If that's not the case, it's possible one of the VCRs is slightly misaligned. Before taking it in for service (assuming you consider the problem worth the time, expense and hassle of a non-warranty repair), why not reverse the roles of the two decks?

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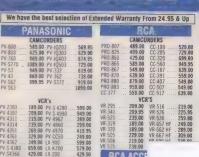
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# TAPES & DISCS

N E W

RELEAS

# FEATURE FILMS

#### Scent of a Woman

1992. Al Pacino, Chris O'Donnell; dir. Martin Bregman. Hi-fi surround, cc. (R) 157 min. priced for rental. LD letterboxed or pan-and-scan \$39.98. MCA/Universal.

Al Pacino's bravura performance as blind and bitter Lt. Col. Frank Slade, the soldier with a death wish, a foul mouth and a nose for integrity, brought the actor a 1992 Oscar and Scent of a Woman more than \$57 million in box-office grosses. It's not hard to see why: The movie is an engaging odyssey of discovery. Slade, the curmudgeon who has given up on everyone and everything, meets and spends a Thanksgiving week-

a punch (quite literally) who'd just as soon rip out your throat as let you help—or pity—him. Yet as the story unfolds, Charlie learns to admire and respect Slade, even as he helps the blind man see life in a new way.

Scent is also an effective audience pleaser of the worst sort: shameless in its sentiment, but charming, amusing and even moving. Its crisp dialog, engaging performances and message about standing up for your beliefs are pure Hollywood but admirable nonetheless. There are also two lovely, muchtalked-about set pieces: Slade driving a car at 70 mph ("Don't blame me," he says about potential accidents, "I can't see") and the seductive tango scene between Slade and a shy young woman (Gabrielle Anwar). It may be predictable, but it works won--Tom Soter derfully.



On the Town: Al Pacino and Chris O'Donnell take in the sounds and *Scent* of the Big Apple.

end in New York City with Charlie (Chris O'Donnell), a 17-year-old who never gives up on anything or anyone, no matter how difficult.

And Slade is difficult: Barking insults and threats, he is a blind man with

## Chaplin

1992. Robert Downey Jr., Moira Kelly, Geraldine Chaplin; dir. Richard Attenborough. Hi-fi stereo. (PG-13) 135 min. \$94.98.

LD letterboxed or pan-and-scan \$39.95. LIVE. Imagine squeezing Oliver Hardy into Stan Laurel's suit and you'll appreciate the difficulty of cramming one colorful life into two hours—and understand where many bio-pics fail. Richard Attenborough's Chaplin is so busy churning out plot that it neglects its characters.

The story of Charlie Chaplin is a juicy, complex one, with rags, riches, young girls, accusations of several so-called evil "isms" and a nice slice of cinema history. Unfortunately, Chaplin never lets us get too close to the man; instead, it presents his story as a barrage of Important Moments and Turning Points—or even worse, as slapstick montages that reduce real events to Keystone Kops chase sequences.





Caffeine Blast: Bill Murray needs all the energy he can muster to relive Groundhog Day, every day.

Make no mistake, Oscar-nominated Robert Downey Jr. is astonishing at capturing the Little Tramp, and, with the help of lavish set and costume design, cinematographer Sven Nykvist ably conveys the magic of early Hollywood. At the very least, Chaplin and its parade of supporting actors—notably Dan Aykroyd as Mack Sennett, Kevin Kline as Douglas Fairbanks and Moira Kelly as Oona—could prompt you to make another rental, of the silent-film variety.

-April P. Bernard

#### Groundhog Day

1993. Bill Murray, Andie MacDowell; co.wr./dir. Harold Ramis. Hi-fi surround, cc. (PG) 101 min. priced for rental. LD letterboxed \$34.95. Columbia TriStar.

## Mad Dog and Glory

1993. Bill Murray, Robert De Niro, Uma Thurman; dir. James McNaughton. Hi-fi surround, cc. (R) 97 min. priced for rental. LD letterboxed or pan-and-scan \$34.98. MCA/Universal.

Too bad all jerks aren't as funny as Bill Murray, because life's daily trials would be a lot easier to take. In Groundhog Day, he's at his best as Phil Connors, a Pittsburgh TV weatherman sent to Puxsutawney to cover the annual groundhog ritual. This arrogant snob quickly gets his comeuppance when he must repeat Feb. 2 over and over, with no relief in sight. Playing Phil's producer, charming Andie MacDowell becomes the catalyst for Phil's transformation from creep to decent soul, and Chris Elliott gets off some good lines as a snide cameraman. But director/co-writer Harold Ramis knows that his leading man's irreverent asides and knowing expressions make the movie work, despite the sappy ending. Although Murray could handle this role in his sleep, he's still a first-class hoot.

Stretching slightly, he portrays a different sort of wiseguy in Mad Dog and Glory, a strained comedy about Chicago cops and crooks. As Frank, an oily underworld boss, he thanks lonely police photographer "Mad Dog" a.k.a. Wayne (Robert De Niro) for saving his life by loaning him lovely young Glory (Uma Thurman) for a week. (No points for guessing where she and Wayne end up.) Nothing works. Thanks to bloody murders and brutal fistfights, the tone fluctuates wildly throughout. Although he's the focus of the story, the dull Wayne never piques our interest, while Glory functions as nothing more than an animated prop, recalling a less enlightened era. Women often get treated as commodities in movies these days, but it's distasteful all the same. —Jon Young

#### Bad Lieutenant

1992. Harvey Keitel; dir. Abel Ferrara. Hifi stereo, cc. (R) and (NC-17) versions. 91 min. and 96 min. \$92.98. LD \$34.95. LIVE.

He's not so much bad, this nameless cop, as he is oblivious to humanity. Years of living and breathing the dregs of New York street life have left him numb, unable but desperate to feel something, anything. He ignores his family and abuses everything he can—drugs, sex, gambling, the power that goes with his job. But as he spirals inevitably downward, he discovers what may be the key to his redemption.

Bad Lieutenant is a breakthrough for Abel Ferrara. Often dismissed as a genre

Cop and a Half: Harvey Keitel's Bad Lieutenant.



# EDITOR'S CHOICE



kenneth korman

Just as director/star Clint Eastwood's powerful and complex Unforgiven shocked those of us who had never taken him seriously as an artist, Warner's new Eastwood Collector's Edition laserdisc boxed set (\$119.95) is a real eye-opener for anyone associating his films with mindless violence and questionable politics. Comprising classic western The Outlaw Josey Wales, the underrated Pale Rider and last year's Oscar favorite Unforgiven, the set reveals Eastwood to be a thoughtful and often inspired filmmaker whose evolving skills have now rendered him something of a national treasure.

Like the other films in this set,

Josey Wales begins with a scene of naked brutality that sets up a seemingly predictable tale of revenge. But this sprawling epic takes a series of surprising turns. After Union soldiers murder his family even though the Civil War has ended, Eastwood's Wales hits the trail to



Pale Rider

"set things right." He hooks up with a Native American who gets plenty of screen time to describe the mistreatment of his people. "We can live together without butchering each other," Wales eventually concludes.

Critics have long dismissed Pale Rider as a shameless plundering of George Stevens' classic Shane, but hindsight suggests Eastwood hoped to pay tribute to an inspiring film while adding a subtle spin of his own. The line between good and evil is more sharply drawn here than in Josey Wales or Unforgiven, but a mystical streak - is Eastwood's character another mysterious man-with-no-name or a ghost from gunfights past? - rescues Pale Rider from the rigidity of traditional westerns like The Searchers. Most important, Pale Rider shows Eastwood developing the sure hand of a director who would later dazzle us with Unforgiven. Sometimes they really do make 'em like they used to - only better.

# TAPES & DISCS

director (best known for episodes of Miami Vice and the cult classic Ms. 45), Ferrara is a maverick, a lapsed Catholic fascinated by the coexistence of good and evil. He gives that obsession full rein here, and has the perfect actor to

bring it to life.

Harvey Keitel's performance is what makes Bad Lieutenant a must-see. Often wasted in supporting roles, at his best he's the most daring American actor of his generation. And here, he goes where no actor has gone before, making this desperate man a raw, walking wound. While not for the faint of heart, even at its ugliest it's a performance you can't take your eyes off. It's also one that deserves to be seen in the original NC-17 version, rather than the edited R version LIVE is also offering.

—M. Faust



Quite a Pair: Johnny Depp and Mary Stuart Masterson make love grand in Benny & Joon.

## Benny & Joon

1993. Johnny Depp, Mary Stuart Masterson, Aidan Quinn; dir. Jeremiah Chechik. Hi-fi surround, cc. (PG) 98 min. \$94.99. LD letterboxed \$34.98. MGM/UA.

Hollywood can't tell a story these days, or execute many of its basic genres. So what are the odds that a studio could produce a movie that's just plain sweet? Can't happen. Not possible. But it is: Benny & Joon, as unlikely a love story as you'll see, is kept lighter than air by its fine cast and the direction of Jeremiah Chechik, who has a nice sense of how long to hold an image.

Benjamin Pearl (Aidan Quinn), who fixes cars, has his feet planted so firmly in the ground he's taken root. He cares for his schizophrenic sister Juniper (Mary Stuart Masterson), who paints, drives away housekeepers and causes traffic jams. Enter Sam (Johnny Depp), a dyslexic who communicates largely through improvised slapstick. What

happens between the two young misfits is as inevitable as Benny's trouble in dealing with it.

The movie is neither realistic nor meant to be. The tone is set by the script, which is clever and whimsical, as is the score by Rachel Portman. The actors play it straight, without wasted gestures—especially important for Depp, who could easily have been annoying instead of endearing.

Benny & Joon has third-act problems, but it doesn't wear out its welcome. Given what it does well, that welcome should be warm indeed.

-Sol Louis Siegel

#### Brother's Keeper

1992. Pr./dir. Joe Berlinger, Bruce Sinofsky. Hi-fi stereo. (NR) 104 min. \$89.95. Fox Lorher.

A journey into a strange, alien world, Brother's Keeper isn't fantasy, but documentary set in upstate New York. This simple, absorbing story of accused murderer Delbert Ward doesn't require flash to pack a punch—its portrait of the odd, reclusive "Ward boys," as they're known in Munnsville, is potent enough.

known in Munnsville, is potent enough.

When ailing Bill Ward passes away in the bed he shared with his sibling, it initially seems like death by natural causes. But following police interrogation, Delbert admits to a mercy killing, and stands trial. However, he's been subjected to a massive, if unsophisticated, frame-up: The bewildered Delbert (whose IQ measures around 60) was co-

erced into signing a confession he could neither read nor understand, and the jury accordingly acquits him.

More striking than the details of the case, however, are the images of Delbert and his two surviving brothers. Living all their lives in run-down farmhouse without heat or running water, these inarticulate men are no match for the outside world. Lyman, who's less capable than Delbert, can't even tell time and becomes paralyzed with tremors of fear on the witness stand. Deeply disturbing and almost unbelievable, Brother's Keeper lingers in the mind long after it's over.

-JY

#### Love Field

1992. Michelle Pfeiffer, Dennis Haysbert; dir. Jonathan Kaplan. Hi-fi surround, cc. (PG-13) 104 min. \$94.98. LD \$39.99.

If you believe *The Player*'s vision of Hollywood, the "high concept" strategy behind *Love Field* went something like this: "Thelma & Louise meets Jungle Fever with a dash of JFK, plus a cute kid." While those responsible probably intended something purer than a formula drama, that's how this story of mismatched fugitives comes off. Though Michelle Pfeiffer, who earned an Oscar nomination for her efforts, and Dennis Haysbert make an interesting odd couple, they can't rise above the awkward servint.

Dallas, November 22, 1963: Lurene Hallett (Pfeiffer), a Kennedy fanatic







down to her Jackie-style 'do, decides to attend the president's funeral over the objections of her yahoo husband (Brian

Kerwin). Hopping a Greyhound to Washington, she strikes up a friendship in the back of the bus with Paul Cater (Haysbert), a black man who has snatched his daughter (Stephanie McFadden) from brutal state institution. One crash and much confusion later, this unlikely trio is fleeing the authorities in a stolen car, headed for predictable action and romance. Despite Pfeiffer's thoughtful portrayal, Lurene is ■ tiresome busybody; enduring her sympathetic yet patronizing attention with stoic courtesy, Haysbert's Paul is simply too noble to be believable. Love Field means well, but fails to deliver. -JY

#### In the Soup

1992. Steve Buscemi, Seymour Cassel, Jennifer Beals; dir. Alexander Rockwell. Hi-fi stereo. (R) 96 min. \$89.95. Academy.

Adolfo Rollo (Steve Buscemi) is a fledgling filmmaker with more ambition than capital. What he does have are a 500-page script and a prospective star—Angela (Jennifer Beals), a neighbor in his Lower East Side tenement. Though he has a mad crush on her, she barely knows he's alive.

Into Adolfo's life comes a boisterous scam artist named Joe (Seymour Cassel). While he says he wants to bankroll the movie, Joe seems more intent on making Adolfo an accomplice to his shady schemes. Initially appalled, Adolfo is drawn to the lively situations and strange characters that inhabit Joe's rambunctious world.

This is Cassel's movie, and he makes the most of his part, continually outraging or enticing the meek Adolfo. Like Marlon Brando and Matthew Broderick in *The Freshman*, he and Buscemi (*Reservoir Dogs*) make a perfect odd couple, Cassel's jolly mischievousness set off by Buscemi's rainbow of confused and terror-stricken expressions.

Though it was filmed in color, *In the Soup* was shown theatrically in black and white. It's on video in both versions, but look for the color one — B&W only gives this lightweight comedy an inappropriately "arty" air. —**MF** 

#### Falling Down

1993. Michael Douglas, Robert Duvall, Barbara Hershey, Tuesday Weld; dir. Joel Schumacher. Hi-fi surround, cc. (R) 113 min. priced for rental. LD letterboxed \$34.98. Warner.

Imagine you're one of those forgotten, middle-class white guys that the media says is under attack. Your wife has left you, your job's been eliminated and your air conditioner doesn't work. You can't even go for a walk without all those annoying people of color trying to rip you off, or worse. What else is there but to become a vigilante?

That's the premise behind this hateful film from the "auteur" who gave us St. Elmo's Fire. In the lead role, Michael Douglas destroys a Korean deli, bashes Latino street toughs, terrorizes a fastfood restaurant and blows up a construction site. Presumably, we're all supposed to cheer him on because we're also mad-as-hell-and-not-going-to-takeit-anymore. You have to wonder who the test audience was for this picture.

Apart from its anti-social scenario, this film is noteworthy for containing more filler than any major motion picture I've ever seen. Robert Duvall, Tuesday Weld and Barbara Hershey talk on the phone I lot. As cynical as the scenes with Douglas are, they're the only meat on the bones here. Whenever he's not on screen, it's time to scan forward.

Falling Down is the celluloid equivalent of A Current Affair. It masquerades as social commentary, but deep in its heart, it knows that it's exploitation.

#### -Ron Goldberg

#### Sommersby

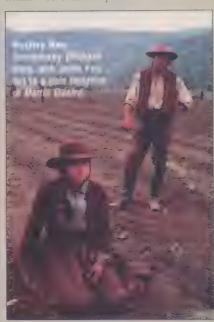
1993. Richard Gere, Jodie Foster; dir. Jon Amiel. Hi-fi surround, cc. (PG-13) 114 min. priced for rental. LD letterboxed \$34.98. Warner.

This ponderous remake of the French classic The Return of Martin Guerre trades the intriguing subtleties of the Gallic original for heavy-handed moralizing and a climax that blends A Tale of Two Cities melodrama with Love Story sentimentality.

Intolerance:
Falling Down's Michael
Douglas loses his cool.

Based on a true incident, both films deal with the return of a soldier years after he left. Everyone notices, yet ignores, changes in his manner: Where he used to be cruel, for instance, he is now kind. In both movies, this idyllic situation is shattered by claims that Martin Guerre/ Jack Sommersby is an imposter.

The original concerned itself with only one question: Was Martin Guerre who he said he was? On that was hung a fascinating tale of trust betrayed and love revealed, all stitched together by the winning performance of Gerard Depardieu as the charming man who might be Guerre. The script was so effective one isn't sure until the very end whodunit—or even why.



The makers of Sommersby apparently didn't trust this simple scenario, so in true Hollywood fashion they overlaid their remake with plots and counterplots: It's not enough to have Sommersby's identity doubted—screenwriter Nicholas Meyer drags in the Ku Klux Klan, black sharecroppers, a rejected lover, a murder plot and a noble self-renunciation right out of Dickens. The story isn't helped by a lackluster cast, headed by charmless Richard Gere and wan Jodie Foster as the lame lovers.

Sommersby, long on speeches and aimless story, is a windy bore that proves once again that if the original movie ain't broke, you shouldn't try to fix it—or redo it.

—TS

# TAPES & DISCS

# The Hairdresser's Husband

1990. Jean Rochefort, Anna Galiena; dir. Patrice Leconte. Hi-fi mono, subtitled, cc. (R) 84 min. priced for rental. Paramount.

Since the age of 12, when the scents of rose water, hair spray, shampoo and, most important, Mrs. Sheaffer herself intoxicated him in barbershop, Antoine (Jean Rochefort) has harbored only one ambition: to marry hairdresser. He meets Mathilde (Anna Galiena), proposes as she finishes his trim, then leaves. Three weeks later, he returns to find her answer is yes. Thus begins an idyllic, passionate life, one that surprises in its intensity and is bathed in the warm golden glow of the afternoon sun.

A leisurely study of obsession and sensuality, The Hairdresser's Husband is a real find. Director Patrice Leconte (Monsieur Hire) works simply and sparingly, mingling scenes from the marriage with flashbacks from Antoine's childhood. Both funny and sadly curious, they quietly reveal The Hairdresser's Husband to be a fascinating, singleminded man, content to worship the woman who shampoos his hair 'til death do them part.

# LASERDISCS

#### Tosca

1992. Catherine Malfitano, Placido Domingo, Ruggero Raimondi; dir. Giuseppe Patroni Griffi. Digital stereo, subtitled. (NR) 115 min. CLV 2 sides. \$44.97. Teldec.



On Location: Last year's mammoth production of *Tosca* uses the opera's actual settings.

Political intrigue, sexual obsession, betrayal, torture and murder — *Tosca* has something for everyone. Puccini's melodramatic classic, set in Rome circa 1800,



pits the famous soprano Tosca (Catherine Malfitano) against secret police chief Baron Scarpia (Ruggero Raimondi), willain refreshingly devoid of redeeming characteristics and a possible inspiration for Darth Vader. Caught in the middle is the painter Cavaradossi (Placido Domingo), who Scarpia sees as a political enemy and the competition.

Since the action is set in actual buildings that still stand, it was inevitable that someone would film the opera in them. This TV production went a few steps further by broadcasting it live, as you-are-there drama, with the singers using radio mics to mix with the studio orchestra. Even the original broadcast times were staggered over the course of a day, which you don't have to worry about on this disc. The result, once you get used to the sheer size of the locations, is resplendent. The singers, working under preposterous conditions, keep digging to reveal their characters when they could have gotten away with running on autopilot.

There are glitches, like the "dead" Scarpia visibly breathing. Still, this is a disc that makes grand opera look really grand.

—SLS

#### The Lover

1992. Jane March, Tony Leung; dir. Jean-Jacques Annaud. Digital surround, letterboxed. (NR) 115 min. plus trailer. CLV 2 sides. \$39.98. MGM/UA.

## Damage

1992. Jeremy Irons, Juliette Binoche; dir. Louis Malle. Digital surround, letterboxed. (NR) 111 min. plus supplement. CLV 2 sides. \$49.99. Criterion.

The Lover, from the Marguerite Duras novel, conceals its passions until it

wants us to feel them. On a ferry in 1929 Indochina, a Chinese man (Tony Leung) is smitten with a white schoolgirl (Jane March) who wills him to seduce her. This film, shot in Vietnam, is easily the best I have seen from Jean-Jacques Annaud. With measured direction and muted photography, he examines the affair and the barriers of race and class, and maintains an ironic distance that is slowly eroded until the end, when we (and the girl) finally realize what has really happened.

Damage takes a different approach to sexual obsession. Director Louis Malle, working from m pitch-perfect script by David Hare, turns the Josephine Hart novel about a British politician, whose life is destroyed by a single glimpse of his son's lover, into m tightly controlled descent into Hell. Juliette Binoche remains more mysterious than human, but Jeremy Irons is fearless in portraying the total loss of control, and Academy Award nominee Miranda Richardson and Rupert Graves (wife and son) beautifully flesh out what are usually stock characters.

Both films, which are sexually explicit in their different styles, are here presented uncut. (The "R" versions are available on tape.) The MGM/UA disc of *The Lover* restores both sexual material and character scenes — as well as two critical lines of narration pertaining to the girl's age. Criterion's unrated *Damage* is more notable for Malle's analog-track narration, which is devoted mostly to the characterization of the individual scenes, and for a rather disjointed supplementary interview segment. Both letterboxed transfers preserve the subtle visual styles admirably.

-SLS

#### Fawlty Towers: The Complete Set

1975-79. John Cleese, Prunella Scales, Connie Booth; dir. John Howard Davies, others. Digital mono. (NR) 368 min. \$119.95. FoxVideo.

Faulty Towers was one of those rare TV series that left its audience screaming for more. Only 12 episodes of this side-splitting BBC comedy were ever produced, and although they've been available on video for some time, Fox has finally rewarded patient laser fans with a boxed set.

For those unfamiliar with the show, suffice it to say that Cleese is at his all-time best here as Basil Fawlty, the beleaguered owner of a seaside resort. Convinced that he could run his hotel properly if it wasn't for the guests,

Man in Charge: Basil Fawlty (John Cleese) of Fawlty Towers.



Fawlty endures abuse from his acidtongued wife, his inept staff and everything else he comes in contact with. Things go wrong with remarkable precision at Fawlty Towers, and each episode builds up to a level of mayhem that makes you laugh no matter how many times you've seen it.

Disc quality is fine here, considering that the show was shot on video and recorded in mono. The VHS tapes, which offer three episodes per volume, are substantially cheaper than the laserdisc, but if you've got a disc player, you'll want permanent copy of this stuff. —RG

#### Pride and Prejudice

1940. B&W. Greer Garson, Laurence Olivier, Mary Boland; dir. Robert Z. Leonard. Digital mono. (NR) 118 min. CLV 2 sides. \$34.98. MGM/UA.

"It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of good fortune must be in want of a wife." With that deliciously sarcastic comment, Jane Austen opens her 1813



novel *Pride and Prejudice*. Thankfully, the 1940 film version retains the same spirit.

With five daughters in need of husbands, Mrs. Bennet (comedic gem Mary Boland) is in a dither. Of the eldest, Jane (Maureeen O'Sullivan), she has no worries; Jane's beauty and sweet nature will guarantee her security. But oh, that Lizzy (Greer Garson)! Her "lively wit" could spell the end for any prospect of matrimony. If only that odious Mr. Darcy (Laurence Olivier), looking down his nose at everybody, were more agreeable.... As for the rest of the girls, one fancies books while the other two are inclined toward dashing officers. What a trial on Mrs. Bennet's poor nerves!

With its fine cast, Pride and Prejudice is a thoroughly delightful comedy of manners. Never has the business of marriage been so diverting. The Oscar-winning period look—with a sharp and nottoo-contrasty transfer to disc—is another triumph for MGM's art department, and the screenplay (co-written by Aldous Huxley) preserves Austen's crisp language. This verbal sparring comes highly recommended.

—APB

#### The Tarzan Collection

1993 comp. B&W. Tarzan Escapes (1936), Tarzan Finds a Son (1939), Tarzan's Secret Treasure (1941), Tarzan's New York Adventure (1942). Johnny Weissmuller, Maureen O'Sullivan, John Sheffield, Barry

Fitzgerald, Cheetah; dir. Richard Thorpe. Digital mono. (NR) 420 min. CLV 8 sides. \$99.98. MGM/UA.

Edgar Rice Burroughs, the former pencil-sharpener salesman who created Tarzan of the Apes, knew his idea of a noble wild man living in a jungle paradise was hokum-"[An apemanl would probably have B.O., halitosis and athlete's foot, plus a most abominable disposition" - but Tarzan, Lord of the Jungle, struck a

Single White Females: Greer Garson (left) is one of *Pride and Preju*dice's five Bennet daughters in search of husbands.

public chord, appearing in countless comic strips, radio shows, plays and the world's longest-running movie series.

The best-known actor in the role, Olympic athlete Johnny Weissmuller, played Tarzan for 17 years and is featured here in four of his six MGM adventures. Although the simple-minded stories make Burroughs' sophisticated jungle man into a primitive boy toy, a hunk with no brains ("Me Tarzan") but a lot of brawn, Weismuller's appeal is obvious. After all, who could resist a guy who wrestles lions before breakfast?

The high-budget formula films, which re-use plot elements and stock footage shamelessly, all involve white explorers intruding on Tarzan's jungle heaven in search of hidden treasure. At the climax of each, the apeman arrives with a flock of elephants to save spouse Jane from torture by savages.

The best of the lot is Tarzan's New York Adventure, which cleverly inverts the formula by having the apeman play intruder in New York City ("stone jungle"). Before the story ends, Tarzan has made monkeys out of cops and robbers alike, leaping across city rooftops and off the Brooklyn Bridge with a breathtaking, Olympian ease. There are also wry moments of social commentary (Tarzan on nightclub: "Smell like Swahili swamp. Why men stay here?" Jane: "It's called having a good time"), amusing antics by Cheetah, and, of course, the elephant stampede at the end. —TS



# DIRECTORY

#### HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTH

Alive

1992. Ethan Hawke, Vincent Spano, Josh Hamilton; dir. Frank Marshall. A real-life Friday-the-13th disaster: how a rugby team survives for 10 weeks after its plane crashes in the Andes. Coming September 8. Surround, cc. (R) 127 min. VHS, Beta \$94.95. LD \$39.99. Touchstone.

The Best of the Kids in the Hall

1993 comp. Side-splitting Canadian ensemble brings you "I'm crushing your head" and other examples of cutting-edge humor.

Stereo. 120 min. VHS only, \$59.95. Columbia TriStar.

Cries and Whispers

1972. Harriet Andersson, Liv Ullmann, Ingrid Thulin; dir. Ingmar Bergman. Marvelously photographed by Sven Nykvist—but monumentally depressing look at dying woman and those who surround her. Mono, subtitled. (R) 106 min. VHS \$39.95 (available late September). LD \$49.95. Home Vision (800-262-8600)/Criterion.

**Escape to Witch Mountain** 

1975. Eddie Albert, Ray Milland, Kim Richards, Ike Eisenmann; dir. John Hough. Bad guys pursue two young orphans with mysterious powers, in the latest "Studio Film Collection" entry. Also new: The Shaggy Dog, Herbie Rides Again and That Darn Cat. Mono, cc. (G) 97 min. VHS, Beta \$19.99. Walt Disney.

Loves of a Blonde

1965. B&W. Hana Brejchova; dir. Milos Forman. Early Czech film—a not-so-simple romance—from the man who later directed *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *Amadeus*. Mono, subtitled. (NR) 88 min. VHS only, \$39.95. Home Vision (800-262-8600).

North & South

1985. 6 vols. Patrick Swayze, James Read, Kirstie Alley, Lesley-Anne Down, Hal Holbrook, Robert Guillaume, Robert Mitchum, Elizabeth Taylor; dir. Richard T. Heffron. The Civil War was never so starstudded! Warner's most requested title. Mono. (NR) 561 min. VHS, Sp.-dubbed VHS, Beta \$199.98. Warner.



For kids, going back to school will seem more tolerable if there's something cool to watch afterward. Warner obliges with The Wind in the Willows, the all-star Alice in Wonderland and Alice Through the Looking Glass, and the inspirational drama A Dream for Christmas, all new to video at \$19.98 each. Or try nifty animation titles Twice Upon a Time and

Watership Down (for slightly older audiences) reduced to \$14.95, as are family films The Beniker Gang, The Neverending Story and Good-Bye, My Lady. MGM/UA gathers the family around the electronic hearth with two Ewok movies, Jack the Giant Killer, Where the Lilies Bloom and Yours, Mine and Ours reduced to \$14.95 each, or, for Free Willy lovers, Namu, the Killer Whale, new to video at the same price.

More repriced titles—and there's a ton—include: Amadeus, One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, Dawn of the Dead (also new to disc), the

35th-anniversary letterboxed *Indiscreet*, and Hallmark Hall of Famers *Foxfire* and *O Pioneers!*, \$14.98 each from Republic; Academy's *Paris Is Burning* and *Voyager*, \$19.95 apiece; *Thousand Pieces of Gold* from Hemdale; *Far and Away* (letterboxed or pan-and-scan), *Death Becomes Her*,

Journey to the Far Side of the Sun and five volumes of Amazing Stories (with "Family Dog"), \$19.98 each from MCA/Universal; New Line's Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me and the Merchant-Ivory production Shakespeare Wallah, \$19.95 each, plus A Lion in Winter, \$14.95; and from Orion, Little Man Tate at \$19.98, and Miami Blues, The Hot Spot and the first two Robocop flicks, \$14.98 apiece.

MPI could spur Beatlemania again with its repriced The Beatles: The First U.S. Visit, now \$24.98, as well as A Hard Day's Night, Help! and Magical Mystery Tour, all \$19.98 each....Seven of Mae West's films—such as I'm No Angel—are

new on video from MCA/Universal, \$14.98 each....Jimmy Cagney is the star of choice at MGM/UA, with Captains of the Clouds, Ceiling Zero and A Midsummer Night's Dream new to video (and The Strawberry Blonde repriced) to \$19.98 each.

—APB



Prisoner: Cell Block H

1979. 6 vols. Campy female convicts, imported from Australia to early '80s syndication. Mono. 95 min. VHS only, \$19.98 each. MPI.

Rio Grande

1950. B&W. John Wayne, Maureen O'Hara, Ben Johnson; dir. John Ford. Striking third in Ford's "cavalry" trilogy, after Fort Apache and She Wore a Yellow Ribbon. Mono. (NR) 105 min. LD \$39.98. Republic.

7 Up in the Soviet Union 7 Up in South Africa

1990. 2 vols. Poignant new takes on the 7 Up concept visit more 7-year-olds, who have startling things to say about perestroika and apartheid. Mono. 68-83 min. each. VHS only, \$19.95 each. Shanachie (201-579-7763).

Smile

1974. Bruce Dern, Barbara Feldon, Michael Kidd; dir. Michael Ritchie. A dark, hilarious look at the Young American Miss pageant, where the smiles come easier with a little Vaseline on the teeth and the judge's son is taking nudie Polaroids of the

Compiled by April P. Bernard



Robocop 2



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INFINITY IS WELL known to lovers of fine audio products, but the company has recently expanded its objectives to encompass a whole other market — those who are merging audio and video for home theater. The reason for Infinity's emergence on the home theater scene is because, until now, home theater shoppers only had two choices: either very expensive systems made up of speakers that might not work well together or inexpensive package systems that aren't up to both music and audio-for-video reproduction.

Infinity's solution to this dilemma can be heard in their new line of speakers, named the Reference Standard Series. The Reference Standard Series brings highperformance loudspeakers into the home theater at an extremely competitive price.

How can they do this? Infinity has more than 25 years of experience in developing high-quality components at an excellent value. For example, some of the proprietary technologies employed in the nine speakers that comprise the Reference Standard Series include the Injection Molded

Graphite (IMG) woofer, which blends acoustically dampened polypropylene and ultra-strong graphite fibers to give stiffness and strength and solid dampening of sonic colorations; the woofer Dispersion Stabilizer, which prevents the high-frequency "beaming" that is common in larger woofers; and the Polycell dome tweeter, which provides ferrofluid cooling of the voice coil — delivering higher power handling and improved linear coil motion.

Another aspect of the Reference Standard Series that sets them apart from their competitors is that all of the speakers, including the subwoofers, are voice-matched. Voice-matching means that each of the speakers share a uniform tonal balance with the others. This adds realism to the home theater, making the voice sound consistent as it moves from speaker to speaker. Voice-matching also allows you to expand or upgrade the system without worrying about compromising sonic balance. You can start off small and work your way up to a larger, full-surround-sound set up and have

each version pump out sounds that satisfy whatever level you are at.

The Reference Standard Series includes all the speaker components necessary to make a powerful home theater, including a video speaker for center channel output. Infinity also understands that the home theater is just that — in the home. As a result, Infinity offers enclosures in West Hills Oak or Black Ash vinyl finishes with black cloth grilles. Plus, their compact design and small footprint make them unobtrusive in even the smallest of viewing rooms.

Now that we've discussed their high quality, what about their affordability? Individual speakers in the Series range in price from approximately \$99.00 to \$359.00 each, and powered subwoofers from \$779.00 to \$999.00 each. With prices like these, an audio/video lover can have a quality six-speaker system — including a powered subwoofer — for less than a pair of fine stereo speakers.

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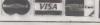
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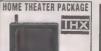








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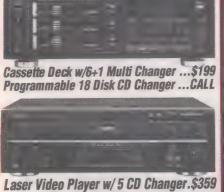
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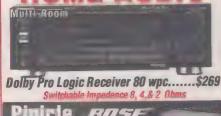




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#### DIRECTORY

contestants. Mono. (PG) 114 min. LD \$34.98. MGM/UA.

Talbot—The Video: Dolphins and Orcas 1993. Spotted dolphins, pilot whales and orcas - all from the man behind the ubiquitous posters, Bob Talbot. Stereo. 30 min. VHS only, \$24.95. Bob Talbot Productions.

This Boy's Life

1993. Robert De Niro, Leonard Di Caprio, Ellen Barkin; dir. Michael Caton-Jones. Three exceptional lead performances mark this adaptation of Tobias Wolffs memoir, a story of child abuse and loneliness. Due September 1. Surround, cc. (R) 115 min. VHS, Sp.-subtitled VHS, Beta priced for rental. LD (letterboxed) \$34.98. Warner.

1993. Christian Slater, Marisa Tomei, Rosie Perez; dir. Tony Bill. Small-town diner is the scene for touching, tear-jerking romance. Surround, cc. (PG-13) 104 min. VHS, Sp.-subtitled VHS, Beta \$94.98. LD (letterboxed) \$34.98. MGM/UA.

Waterland

1993. Jeremy Irons, Ethan Hawke; dir. Stephen Gyllenhaal. From the director of Paris Trout (and made with the same unflinching vision), a history teacher puts his own troubled past on the syllabus. Stereo. (R) 95 min. VHS priced for rental. LD \$39.99. New Line.

The World According to John Coltrane 1991. Documentary on '60s jazz saxophonist - incorporating long unseen performances, such as Coltrane on the alto sax on Charlie Parker's "Koko" - inaugurates seven-part jazz and blues series. Stereo. 60 min. VHS \$29.98. LD \$39.98. BMG.

A Year in Provence

1993. 4 vols. John Thaw, Lindsay Duncan; dir. David Tucker. A season-by-season account of Peter Mayle's new home and life in the south of France, via the best-selling novel and the BBC. Mono. 90 min. each. VHS only, \$79.95. A&E.

#### ACTION/ADVENTURE

**Boiling Point** 

1993. Wesley Snipes, Dennis Hopper; dir. James B. Harris. Two strong leads - a Treasury agent and his con-man quarry – in L.A. film noir. Surround, cc. (R) 93 min. VHS, Sp.-subtitled VHS, Beta priced for rental. LD (letterboxed) \$34.98. Warner.

1993. Tom Berenger, Billy Zane; dir. Luis Llosa. Surprisingly well-reviewed for a formula actioner, with hardened Marine and his novice partner stalking Colombian drug lord. Surround, cc. (R) 99 min. VHS priced for rental. 8mm \$29.95. LD (letterboxed) \$34.95. Columbia TriStar.

#### SPECIAL-INTEREST

Ray Bradbury's Chronicles: The Martian Episodes

1990-91. David Carradine, Ben Cross, Hal Linden; various dirs. Sci-fi series compilation. Mono, cc. 100 min. VHS only, \$89.95. Worldvision.

Sade: Life Promise Pride Love

1993 comp. Thirteen sultry songs from her four albums, including *The Bodyguard's* "No Ordinary Love." Stereo. 55 min. VHS \$19.98. LD \$29.98. Epic.

Toshiko Akiyoshi Jazz Orchestra: Strive for Jive

1991. Big-band sound from its number-one group, according to the readers and critics of Downbeat Magazine. Stereo. 48 min. VHS only, \$19.98. V.I.E.W. (800-843-9843).

The Great Waitz

1955. B&W. Musical about Johann Strauss Jr., from the Golden Age's Max Liebman Presents. (Liebman was the former producer of Your Show of Shows.) Mono. 78 min. VHS only, \$39.95. Video Artists International.

#### LASERDISCS

Animation Legend Winsor McCay

1993 comp. B&W/color. Includes every surviving film made by McCay, such as a hand-colored Little Nemo from 1911, good old Gertie the Dinosaur and The Sinking of the Lusitania. Stereo, windowboxed. 100 min. CAV 4 sides. \$59.95. Lumivision (800-776-LUMI).

Ay, Carmela!

1990. Carmen Maura, Andres Pajares; dir. Carlos Saura. Touring vaudevillians accidentally travel behind enemy lines in the Spanish Civil War. Mono, subtitled. (PG-13) 103 min. \$34.95. HBO.

**Confidentially Yours** 

1983. B&W. Fanny Ardant, Jean-Louis Trintignant; dir. Francois Truffaut. Truffaut lightens up Hitchcock with this fluffy murder mystery, starring a lovestruck secretary seeking to clear her boss's name. Mono, subtitled. (PG) 111 min. \$49.95. Criterion.

Joe Jackson: Laughter & Lust Live 1991. Jackson looks sharp in Sydney, with performances of "Steppin' Out," "Real Men" and more. Stereo. 75 min. \$34.95. Pioneer Artists.

Please Don't Eat the Daisles

1960. Doris Day, David Niven, Janis Paige; dir. Charles Walters. Drama critic and his family leave the nightmare of city living for the nightmare of country living. Mono, letterboxed. (NR) 111 min. \$34.98. MGM/UA.

The Student Prince/ The Student Prince in Old Heidelberg

Double feature. Student Prince: 1954. Ann Blyth, Edmund Purdom; dir. Richard Thorpe. Stereo, letterboxed. (G) 107 min. Heidelberg: 1928. B&W. Ramon Novarro, Norma Shearer; dir. Ernst Lubitsch. Stereo. (NR) 105 min. Both interesting, the first for Mario Lanza's voice, the second for the ever-sparkling Lubitsch touch. \$44.98. MGM/UA.

The Unforgiven

1960. Burt Lancaster, Audrey Hepburn, Lillian Gish, Audie Murphy; dir. John Huston. Emotions rage out of control in 1850s Texas when a white family's adopted daughter is thought to be an Indian. Mono, letterboxed. (NR) 125 min. \$39.98. MGM/UA.



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- 1 LUX LOW-LIGHT RECORDING

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8-438

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#### 8-918 (Hi-Band 8mm)

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- PICKUP FOR TRUEST CO OR REPRODUCTION AND

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- 15x POWER ZOOM
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#### CC177

- 8:1 Power Zoom
- Flying Erase Head

  1 Lux Minimum Illumination
- Fuil Range Autofocus
- System
   16x9 Recording
   Automatic Head Cleaner
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- PV-IQ 203 10X Power Zoom .....Call PV-IQ 303 With Light...........Call PV-IQ 403 Color Viewfinder.
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- 10 X 1 700M
- PROGRAM AE
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#### CC180

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**Pro 807** 

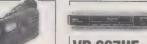
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- High-band 8mm image quality with Hi-Fi stereo sound.
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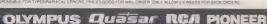
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Name	please print)
Address	,
City	StateZip
Telephone Number (with A	rea Code)
	□ 25"-27" (□ 35"+ D□
2. Approximately how many hours pe 0-2 E 3-5	r day do you watch TV? F 6-10 G
3. How far in advance do you plan you hour H lady I	1 week J No Planning K
4. Do you tape "series" programming Yes L ☐ No M ☐	(i.e. soap operas, mini-series)?
5. Which sources do you use to plan T Daily Newspaper N□ Cable Guide TV Guide Q□ Other R□	O Weekly Newspaper Insert P
6. How many programs do you tape	7+ 0
7. If programming your VCR was made Yes V□ No W□	e easier would you record additional shows?
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TV Guide Q Other R	e O Weekly Newspaper Insert P
6. How many programs do you tape	e per week?
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8. Are you currently a subscriber to	VIDEO? Yes X No Y

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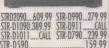
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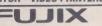
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# It's 2008. Do you know where your television is?

The year is 2008.

Diminishing groups of aging videophiles, known once as baby boomers, are celebrating the thirtysomething anniversary of the VCR. In its heyday, 15 years ago, the VCR was the movie culture's primary playback machine. Today, video junkies await instead the boxed set of The Tonight Show, 30 years of Johnny Carson on one CD with a Video Mini-Disc for Leno, Paar, Joan Rivers and new Tonight hosts like Macaulay Culkin.

Most learned of the release by scanning *The L.A. Video Times* on handheld "digital assistants." The viewers, with color LCD screens, are finally living up to their promise as more publications broadcast electronic editions. The

arcades. Traveling executives carry cellular videophones, kids carry video beepers, and felons under house arrest wear video detention bracelets.

The newest camcorders, dubbed DisCorders, use erasable MiniDiscs powered by blue-light lasers. They're small enough to compete with the digital video cams that only a few years ago started to replace VHS and 8mm models. There's even talk of solid-state camcorders. These "chipcams" will have almost no moving parts and rely on a flash-memory microchip to store 20 minutes of video per shoot.

It's thought 20 minutes will be enough time to make chipcams viable, since most video is now shot in brief seg-

they may be.

With so much action on the airwaves, few want to be without some sort of TV monitor for very long. In the full-spectrum culture of 2008, it's no longer a question of what show's on when. Everything's on all the time. Total access has met instant gratification. News, sports, movies, concerts, dramas, sitcoms and special events are all "available-on-demand," 24 hours a day, every day.

One needs only the time and money to plug in and watch, aided perhaps by a few sessions with a personal video consultant. These skilled professionals serve, like travel agents, as essential guides through the web of programs, services and systems everyone must now

choose among.

And pay for. Subscriber fees, as always, are controversial, especially now when virtually everything watchable is pay-per-view, with premium charges for prime-time hours and high-definition reception. Of course, some broadcasts are still free — Congress would never allow this tradition to die out — but they tend to be home-shopping programs.

Not all is copacetic in video's brave new world. Big, flat TV screens are still thought to be about 10 years away, video viruses occasionally cause TVs to crash, and Sega's new holographic projectors have a dimensional picture resolution so weak it's been compared to VHS.

On a broader level, the personal Video Identification Numbers that make it possible for people to access videobased services wherever they are have also led to a black market in stolen VINs. Meanwhile, state legislatures debate the need for Grants in Video Aid for Dependent Families, believing that essential video services like 911 Telemergency Calls cannot be reserved only for those with health insurance. For the interpersonally challenged, an on-line network, cruelly known as Technogeeks Anonymous, is offering the first 12-step program for people who can no longer communicate by non-electronic means. Don't laugh - membership is growing fast and discounts are available.

The year, after all, is 2008.



screen dumps look like newspaper pages, but the stories can be read or listened to while the pictures trigger video clips. The world of 2008 is different in

The world of 2008 is different in many ways from the one we recall from '93. Most home theaters have two-seat magic-motion machines, small versions of the big ones theme parks pioneered in the early '90s. Video rental stores have turned into multimedia entertainment

ments for business purposes and sent, by videophone and fax services, directly to desktop monitors or palmtop beepers.

Mobility is still highly valued. Indeed, the latest antennas for direct-broadcast satellites can be built into hatbands, leading to a flurry of trendy chapeaus like the Steadicap and the DBS Walkabout, so people can stay in touch, using their digital assistants, wherever

With contributions by Jim Barry, April Bernard, Brent Butterworth, Brian Clark and Kenneth Korman.

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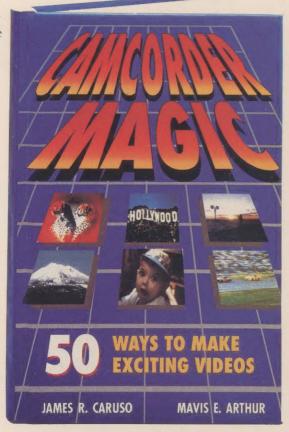
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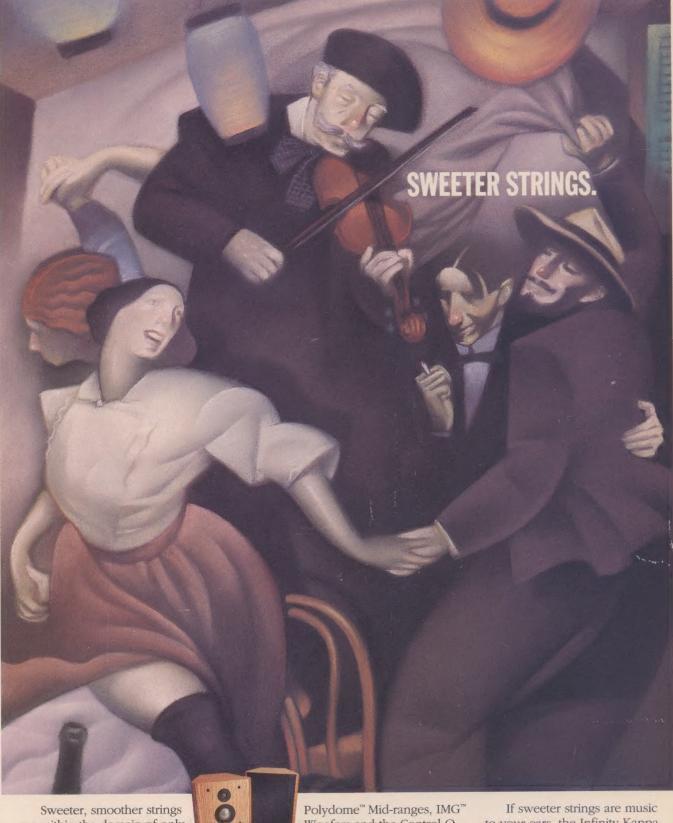
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